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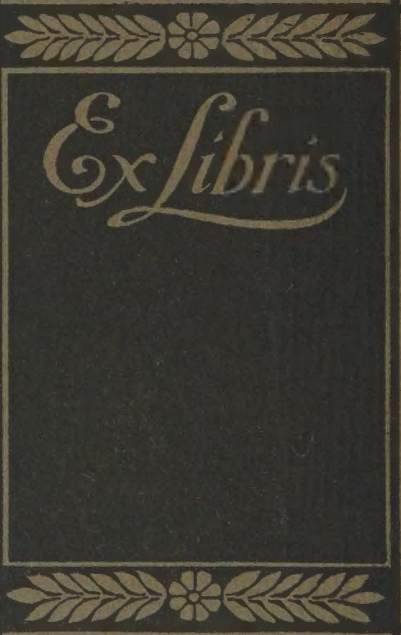

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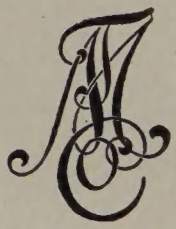
The Good-Natured Man



Murder! We shall all be burnt in our beds.

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN

Oliver Goldsmith

PR
3487
G6
1930

Edited by R. N. Whiteford
Revised by H. Y. Moffett
Illustrated by G. M. Richards

The Macmillan Company

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PREFACE

When I undertook to write a comedy, I confess I was strongly prepossessed in favour of the poets of the last age, and strove to imitate them. The term genteel comedy was then unknown amongst us, and little more was desired by an audience than nature and humour, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous. The author of the following scenes never imagined that more would be expected of him, and, therefore, to delineate character has been his principal aim. Those who know anything of composition are sensible that, in pursuing humour, it will sometimes lead us into the recesses of the mean: I was even tempted to look for it in the master of a sponging-house; but, in deference to the public taste, grown of late, perhaps, too delicate, the scene of the bailiffs was retrenched in the representation. In deference also to the judgment of a few friends, who think in a particular way, the scene is here restored. The author submits it to the reader in his closet; and hopes that too much refinement will not banish humour and character from ours, as it has already done from the French theatre. Indeed, the French

comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental that it has not only banished humour and Molière from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too.

Upon the whole, the author returns his thanks to the public for the favourable reception which the *Good-Natured Man* has met with; and to Mr. Colman in particular, for his kindness to it. It may not also be improper to assure any, who shall hereafter write for the theatre, that merit, or supposed merit, will ever be a sufficient passport to his protection.

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

[THE CAST OF THE PLAY AS IT WAS FIRST ACTED AT COVENT GARDEN.]

MEN

Mr. Honeywood	Mr. Powell
Croaker	Mr. Shuter
Lofty	Mr. Woodward
Sir William Honeywood	Mr. Clarke
Leontine	Mr. Bensley
Jarvis	Mr. Dunstal
Butler	Mr. Cushing
Bailiff	Mr. R. Smith
Dubardieu	Mr. Holtom
Postboy	Mr. Quick

WOMEN

Miss Richland	Mrs. Bulkley
Olivia	Mrs. Mattocks
Mrs. Croaker	Mrs. Pitt
Garnet	Mrs. Green
Landlady	Mrs. White

SCENE—*London*

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN BY DR. JOHNSON, SPOKEN BY MR. BENSLEY°

PRESS'D by the load of life, the weary mind
Surveys the general toil of human kind,
With cool submission joins the lab'ring train,
And social sorrow loses half its pain:
Our anxious bard, without complaint, may share
This bustling season's epidemic care,
Like Cæsar's pilot, dignified by fate,
Toss'd in one common storm with all the great;
Distress'd alike, the statesman and the wit,
When one a Borough courts, and one the Pit.
The busy candidates for power and fame
Have hopes, and fears, and wishes, just the same;
Disabled both to combat or to fly,
Must hear all taunts, and hear without reply;
Uncheck'd, on both loud rabbles vent their rage,
As mongrels bay the lion in a cage.

Th' offended burgess hoards his angry tale,
For that blest year when all that vote may rail;
Their schemes of spite the poet's foes dismiss,
Till that glad night when all that hate may hiss.
"This day, the powder'd curls and golden coat,"
Says swelling Crispin,° "begg'd a cobbler's vote."
"This night, our wit," the pert apprentice cries,
"Lies at my feet—I hiss him, and he dies."
The great, 'tis true, can charm th' electing tribe:
The bard may supplicate, but cannot bribe.
Yet, judged by those whose voices ne'er were sold,
He feels no want of ill-persuading gold;
But confident of praise, if praise be due,
Trusts, without fear, to merit, and to you.

ACT I

SCENE I

An Apartment in Young Honeywood's House

Enter SIR WILLIAM HONEYWOOD *and* JARVIS

SIR WILLIAM. Good Jarvis, make no apologies for this honest bluntness. Fidelity like yours, is the best excuse for every freedom.

JARVIS. I can't help being blunt, and being very angry too, when I hear you talk of disinheriting so good, so worthy a young gentleman as your nephew, my master. All the world loves him.

SIR WILLIAM. Say rather, that he loves all the world; that is his fault.

JARVIS. I am sure there is no part of it more dear to him than you are, though he has not seen you since he was a child.

SIR WILLIAM. What signifies this affection to me? or how can I be proud of a place in a heart where every sharper and coxcomb find an easy entrance?

JARVIS. I grant you that he is rather too good-natured; that he's too much every man's

man; that he laughs this minute with one, and cries the next with another; but whose instructions may he thank for all this?

SIR WILLIAM. Not mine, sure. My letters to him during my employment in Italy, taught him only that philosophy which might prevent, not defend, his errors.

JARVIS. Faith, begging your honour's pardon, I'm sorry they taught him any philosophy at all; it has only served to spoil him. This same philosophy is a good horse in a stable, but an arrant jade on a journey. For my own part, whenever I hear him mention the name on't, I'm always sure he's going to play the fool.

SIR WILLIAM. Don't let us ascribe his faults to his philosophy, I entreat you. No, Jarvis, his good-nature arises rather from his fears of offending the importunate, than his desire of making the deserving happy.

JARVIS. What it arises from, I don't know. But, to be sure, everybody has it that asks it.

SIR WILLIAM. Ay, or that does not ask it. I have been now for some time a concealed spectator of his follies, and find them as boundless as his dissipation.

JARVIS. And yet, faith, he has some fine name or other for them all. He calls his extravagance, generosity; and his trusting everybody, universal benevolence. It was but last week he

went security for a fellow whose face he scarce knew, and that he called an act of exalted mu—mu—munificence; ay, that was the name he gave it.

SIR WILLIAM. And upon that I proceed, as my last effort, though with very little hopes, to reclaim him. That very fellow has just absconded, and I have taken up the security. Now, my intention is to involve him in fictitious distress, before he has plunged himself into real calamity: to arrest him for that very debt; to clap an officer upon him, and then let him see which of his friends will come to his relief.

JARVIS. Well, if I could but any way see him thoroughly vexed, every groan of his would be music to me; yet, faith, I believe it impossible. I have tried to fret him myself every morning these three years; but instead of being angry, he sits as calmly to hear me scold, as he does to his hairdresser.

SIR WILLIAM. We must try him once more, however, and I'll go this instant to put my scheme into execution: and I don't despair of succeeding, as, by your means, I can have frequent opportunities of being about him without being known. What a pity it is, Jarvis, that any man's good-will to others should produce so much neglect of himself, as to require correction! Yet we must touch his weaknesses with a delicate hand. There are some faults so

nearly allied to excellence, that we can scarce weed out the vice without eradicating the virtue. [*Exit*

JARVIS. Well, go thy ways, Sir William Honeywood. It is not without reason that the world allows thee to be the best of men. But here comes his hopeful nephew,—the strange, good-natured, foolish, open-hearted—And yet, all his faults are such that one loves him still the better for them.

Enter HONEYWOOD

HONEYWOOD. Well, Jarvis, what messages from my friends this morning?

JARVIS. You have no friends.

HONEYWOOD. Well, from my acquaintance then?

JARVIS. [*Pulling out bills.*] A few of our usual cards of compliment, that's all. This bill from your tailor; this from your mercer; and this from the little broker in Crooked-lane. He says he has been at a great deal of trouble to get back the money you borrowed.

HONEYWOOD. That I don't know; but I am sure we were at a great deal of trouble in getting him to lend it.

JARVIS. He has lost all patience.

HONEYWOOD. Then he has lost a very good thing.

JARVIS. There's that ten guineas you were sending to the poor gentleman and his children in the Fleet. I believe they would stop his mouth, for a while at least.

HONEYWOOD. Ay, Jarvis, but what will fill their mouths in the mean time? Must I be cruel, because he happens to be importunate; and, to relieve his avarice, leave them to insupportable distress?

JARVIS. 'Sdeath! Sir, the question now is how to relieve yourself—yourself. Haven't I reason to be out of my senses, when I see things going at sixes and sevens?

HONEYWOOD. Whatever reason you may have for being out of your senses, I hope you'll allow that I'm not quite unreasonable for continuing in mine.

JARVIS. You are the only man alive in your present situation that could do so. Everything upon the waste. There's Miss Richland and her fine fortune gone already, and upon the point of being given to your rival—

HONEYWOOD. I'm no man's rival.

JARVIS. Your uncle in Italy preparing to disinherit you; your own fortune almost spent; and nothing but pressing creditors, false friends, and a pack of drunken servants that your kindness has made unfit for any other family.

HONEYWOOD. Then they have the more occasion for being in mine.

JARVIS. Soh! What will you have done with him that I caught stealing your plate in the pantry? In the fact—I caught him in the fact.

HONEYWOOD. In the fact? If so, I really think that we should pay him his wages, and turn him off.

JARVIS. He shall be turned off at Tyburn, the dog: we'll hang him, if it be only to frighten the rest of the family.

HONEYWOOD. No, Jarvis: it's enough that we have lost what he has stolen; let us not add to it the loss of a fellow-creature!

JARVIS. Very fine! well, here was the footman just now, to complain of the butler: he says he does most work, and ought to have most wages.

HONEYWOOD. That's but just; though perhaps here comes the butler to complain of the footman.

JARVIS. Ay, it's the way with them all, from the scullion to the privy-councillor. If they have a bad master, they keep quarrelling with him; if they have a good master, they keep quarrelling with one another.

Enter BUTLER, *drunk*

BUTLER. Sir, I'll not stay in the family with Jonathan; you must part with him, or part

with me, that's the ex—ex—exposition of the matter, sir.

HONEYWOOD. Full and explicit enough. But what's his fault, good Philip?

BUTLER. Sir, he's given to drinking, sir, and I shall have my morals corrupted by keeping such company.

HONEYWOOD. Ha! ha! he has such a diverting way—

JARVIS. Oh, quite amusing.

BUTLER. I find my wine's a-going, sir: and liquors don't go without mouths, sir—I hate a drunkard, sir.

HONEYWOOD. Well, well, Philip, I'll hear you upon that another time; so go to bed now.

JARVIS. To bed! let him go to the devil.

BUTLER. Begging your honour's pardon, and begging your pardon, master Jarvis, I'll not go to bed, nor to the devil neither. I have enough to do to mind my cellar. I forgot, your honour, Mr. Croaker is below. I came on purpose to tell you.

HONEYWOOD. Why didn't you show him up, blockhead?

BUTLER. Show him up, sir? With all my heart, sir. Up or down, all's one to me. [*Exit*

JARVIS. Ay, we have one or other of that family in this house from morning till night. He comes on the old affair, I suppose. The match between his son, that's just returned

from Paris, and Miss Richland, the young lady he's guardian to.

HONEYWOOD. Perhaps so. Mr. Croaker, knowing my friendship for the young lady, has got it into his head that I can persuade her to what I please.

JARVIS. Ah! if you loved yourself but half as well as she loves you, we should soon see a marriage that would soon set all things to rights again.

HONEYWOOD. Love me! Sure, Jarvis, you dream. No, no; her intimacy with me never amounted to more than friendship—mere friendship. That she is the most lovely woman that ever warmed the human heart with desire, I own. But never let me harbour a thought of making her unhappy, by a connection with one so unworthy her merits as I am. No, Jarvis, it shall be my study to serve her, even in spite of my wishes; and to secure her happiness, though it destroys my own.

JARVIS. Was ever the like? I want patience.

HONEYWOOD. Besides, Jarvis, though I could obtain Miss Richland's consent, do you think I could succeed with her guardian, or Mrs. Croaker, his wife; who, though both very fine in their way, are yet a little opposite in their dispositions, you know.

JARVIS. Opposite enough, Heaven knows!

the very reverse of each other: she all laugh, and no joke; he always complaining, and never sorrowful—a fretful, poor soul, that has a new distress for every hour in the four-and-twenty—

HONEYWOOD. Hush, hush! he's coming up, he'll hear you.

JARVIS. One whose voice is a passing bell—

HONEYWOOD. Well, well; go, do.

JARVIS. A raven that bodes nothing but mischief—a coffin and cross-bones—a bundle of rue—a sprig of deadly nightshade—a— [HONEYWOOD, *stopping his mouth, at last pushes him off.*] [*Exit* JARVIS

HONEYWOOD. I must own my old monitor is not entirely wrong. There is something in my friend Croaker's conversation that quite depresses me. His very mirth is an antidote to all gaiety, and his appearance has a stronger effect on my spirits than an undertaker's shop —Mr. Croaker, this is such a satisfaction—

Enter CROAKER

CROAKER. A pleasant morning to Mr. Honeywood, and many of them. How is this! you look most shockingly to-day, my dear friend. I hope this weather does not affect your spirits. To be sure, if this weather continues—I say

nothing; but God send we be all better this day three months!

HONEYWOOD. I heartily concur in the wish, though, I own, not in your apprehensions.

CROAKER. May be not. Indeed, what signifies what weather we have in a country going to ruin like ours? Taxes rising and trade falling. Money flying out of the kingdom, and Jesuits swarming into it. I know, at this time, no less than a hundred and twenty-seven Jesuits between Charing Cross and Temple Bar.

HONEYWOOD. The Jesuits will scarce pervert you or me, I should hope.

CROAKER. May be not. Indeed, what signifies whom they pervert, in a country that has scarce any religion to lose? I'm only afraid for our wives and daughters.

HONEYWOOD. I have no apprehensions for the ladies, I assure you.

CROAKER. May be not. Indeed, what signifies whether they be perverted or no? The women in my time were good for something. I have seen a lady drest from top to toe in her own manufactures formerly; but now-a-days, the devil a thing of their own manufactures about them, except their faces.

HONEYWOOD. But, however these faults may be practised abroad, you don't find them at home, either with Mrs. Croaker, Olivia, or Miss Richland?

Ha! Ha! He has such a diverting way.

CROAKER. The best of them will never be canonized for a saint when she's dead.—By the bye, my dear friend, I don't find this match between Miss Richland and my son much relished, either by one side or t'other.

HONEYWOOD. I thought otherwise.

CROAKER. Ah! Mr. Honeywood, a little of your fine serious advice to the young lady might go far: I know she has a very exalted opinion of your understanding.

HONEYWOOD. But would not that be usurping an authority that more properly belongs to yourself?

CROAKER. My dear friend, you know but little of my authority at home. People think, indeed, because they see me come out in the morning thus, with a pleasant face, and to make my friends merry, that all's well within. But I have cares that would break a heart of stone. My wife has so encroached upon every one of my privileges, that I'm now no more than a mere lodger in my own house.

HONEYWOOD. But a little spirit exerted on your side might perhaps restore your authority.

CROAKER. No, though I had the spirit of a lion! I do rouse sometimes; but what then? always haggling and haggling. A man is tired of getting the better before his wife is tired of losing the victory.

HONEYWOOD. It's a melancholy considera- 310
tion, indeed, that our chief comforts often produce our greatest anxieties, and that an increase of our possessions is but an inlet to new disquietudes.

CROAKER. Ah! my dear friend, these were 315
the very words of poor Dick Doleful to me, not a week before he made away with himself. Indeed, Mr. Honeywood, I never see you but you put me in mind of poor Dick. Ah! there was merit neglected for you! and so 320
true a friend! we loved each other for thirty years, and yet he never asked me to lend him a single farthing.

HONEYWOOD. Pray what could induce him to commit so rash an action at last? 325

CROAKER. I don't know: some people were malicious enough to say it was keeping company with me; because we used to meet now and then, and open our hearts to each other. To be sure, I loved to hear him talk, and he 330
loved to hear me talk; poor, dear Dick! He used to say that Croaker rhymed to joker; and so we used to laugh—Poor Dick! [*Going to cry.*]

HONEYWOOD. His fate affects me. 335

CROAKER. Ay! he grew sick of this miserable life, where we do nothing but eat and grow hungry, dress and undress, get up and lie down; while reason, that should watch like

a nurse by our side, falls as fast asleep as we do.

HONEYWOOD. To say truth, if we compare that part of life which is to come, by that which we have past, the prospect is hideous.

CROAKER. Life, at the greatest and best, is but a forward child, that must be humoured and coaxed a little till it falls asleep, and then all the care is over.

HONEYWOOD. Very true, sir, nothing can exceed the vanity of our existence, but the folly of our pursuits. We wept when we came into the world, and every day tells us why.

CROAKER. Ah! my dear friend, it is a perfect satisfaction to be miserable with you. My son Leontine shan't lose the benefit of such fine conversation. I'll just step home for him. I am willing to show him so much seriousness in one scarce older than himself. And what if I bring my last letter to the *Gazetteer*, on the increase and progress of earthquakes? It will amuse us, I promise you. I there prove how the late earthquake is coming round to pay us another visit—from London to Lisbon, from Lisbon to the Canary Islands, from the Canary Islands to Palmyra, from Palmyra to Constantinople, and so from Constantinople back to London again. [*Exit*

HONEYWOOD. Poor Croaker! his situation deserves the utmost pity. I shall scarce re-

cover my spirits these three days. Sure, to live upon such terms, is worse than death itself. And yet, when I consider my own situation—a broken fortune, a hopeless passion, friends in distress, the wish, but not the power, to serve them—[*Pausing and sighing.*]

Enter BUTLER

BUTLER. More company below, sir; Mrs. Croaker and Miss Richland; shall I show them up?—but they're showing up themselves. [*Exit*

Enter MRS. CROAKER *and* MISS RICHLAND

MISS RICHLAND. You're always in such spirits.

MRS. CROAKER. We have just come, my dear Honeywood, from the auction. There was the old deaf dowager, as usual, bidding like a fury against herself. And then so curious in antiques! herself, the most genuine piece of antiquity in the whole collection.

HONEYWOOD. Excuse me, ladies, if some uneasiness from friendship makes me unfit to share in this good humour: I know you'll pardon me.

MRS. CROAKER. I vow he seems as melancholy as if he had taken a dose of my hus-

band this morning. Well, if Richland here can pardon you, I must.

MISS RICHLAND. You would seem to insinuate, madam, that I have particular reasons for being disposed to refuse it.

MRS. CROAKER. Whatever I insinuate, my dear, don't be so ready to wish an explanation.

MISS RICHLAND. I own I should be sorry Mr. Honeywood's long friendship and mine should be misunderstood.

HONEYWOOD. There's no answering for others, madam; but I hope you'll never find me presuming to offer more than the most delicate friendship may readily allow.

MISS RICHLAND. And I shall be prouder of such a tribute from you, than the most passionate professions from others.

HONEYWOOD. My own sentiments, madam: friendship is a disinterested commerce between equals; love, an abject intercourse between tyrants and slaves.

MISS RICHLAND. And, without a compliment, I know none more disinterested, or more capable of friendship, than Mr. Honeywood.

MRS. CROAKER. And, indeed, I know nobody that has more friends, at least among the ladies. Miss Fruzz, Miss Oddbody, and Miss Winterbottom praise him in all com-

panies. As for Miss Biddy Bundle, she's his professed admirer.

MISS RICHLAND. Indeed! an admirer!—I did not know, sir, you were such a favourite there. But is she, seriously, so handsome? Is she the mighty thing talked of?

HONEYWOOD. The town, madam, seldom begins to praise a lady's beauty, till she's beginning to lose it. [*Smiling.*]

MRS. CROAKER. But she's resolved never to lose it, it seems. For as her natural face decays, her skill improves in making the artificial one. Well, nothing diverts me more than one of those fine, old, dressy things, who thinks to conceal her age by everywhere exposing her person; sticking herself up in the front of a side-box; trailing through a minuet at Almack's;° and then, in the public gardens—looking, for all the world, like one of the painted ruins° of the place.

HONEYWOOD. Every age has its admirers, ladies. While you, perhaps, are trading among the warmer climates of youth, there ought to be some to carry on a useful commerce in the frozen latitudes beyond fifty.

MISS RICHLAND. But, then, the mortifications they must suffer, before they can be fitted out for traffic. I have seen one of them fret a whole morning at her hairdresser, when all the fault was her face.

HONEYWOOD. And yet, I'll engage, has carried that face at last to a very good market. This good-natured town, madam, has husbands, like spectacles, to fit every age, from fifteen to fourscore.

MRS. CROAKER. Well, you're a dear good-natured creature. But you know you're engaged with us this morning upon a strolling party. I want to show Olivia the town, and the things: I believe I shall have business for you the whole day.

HONEYWOOD. I am sorry, madam, I have an appointment with Mr. Croaker, which it is impossible to put off.

MRS. CROAKER. What! with my husband? Then I'm resolved to take no refusal. Nay, I protest you must. You know I never laugh so much as with you.

HONEYWOOD. Why, if I must, I must. I'll swear you have put me into such spirits. Well, do you find jest, and I'll find laugh, I promise you. We'll wait for the chariot in the next room. [*Exeunt*

Enter LEONTINE *and* OLIVIA

LEONTINE. There they go, thoughtless and happy. My dearest Olivia, what would I give to see you capable of sharing in their amusements, and as cheerful as they are!

OLIVIA. How, my dear Leontine, how can I be cheerful, when I have so many terrors to oppress me? The fear of being detected by this family, and the apprehensions of a censuring world, when I must be detected—

LEONTINE. The world, my love! what can it say? At worst it can only say that, being compelled by a mercenary guardian to embrace a life you disliked, you formed a resolution of flying with the man of your choice; that you confided in his honour, and took refuge in my father's house,—the only one where yours could remain without censure.

OLIVIA. But consider, Leontine, your disobedience and my indiscretion; your being sent to France to bring home a sister, and, instead of a sister, bringing home—

LEONTINE. One dearer than a thousand sisters. One that I am convinced will be equally dear to the rest of the family, when she comes to be known.

OLIVIA. And that, I fear, will shortly be.

LEONTINE. Impossible, till we ourselves think proper to make the discovery. My sister, you know, has been with her aunt, at Lyons, since she was a child, and you find every creature in the family takes you for her.

OLIVIA. But mayn't she write? mayn't her aunt write?

LEONTINE. Her aunt scarce ever writes, and all my sister's letters are directed to me.

OLIVIA. But won't your refusing Miss Richland, for whom you know the old gentleman intends you, create a suspicion?

LEONTINE. There, there's my master stroke. I have resolved not to refuse her; nay, an hour hence I have consented to go with my father to make her an offer of my heart and fortune.

OLIVIA. Your heart and fortune!

LEONTINE. Don't be alarmed, my dearest. Can Olivia think so meanly of my honour, or my love, as to suppose I could ever hope for happiness from any but her? No, my Olivia, neither the force, nor, permit me to add, the delicacy of my passion, leave any room to suspect me. I only offer Miss Richland a heart I am convinced she will refuse; as I am confident, that, without knowing it, her affections are fixed upon Mr. Honeywood.

OLIVIA. Mr. Honeywood! You'll excuse my apprehensions; but when your merits come to be put in the balance—

LEONTINE. You view them with too much partiality. However, by making this offer, I show a seeming compliance with my father's command; and perhaps, upon her refusal, I may have his consent to choose for myself.

OLIVIA. Well, I submit. And yet, my Leontine, I own, I shall envy her even your pretended addresses. I consider every look, every expression of your esteem, as due only to me. This is folly, perhaps: I allow it; but it is natural to suppose, that merit which has made an impression on one's own heart may be powerful over that of another.

LEONTINE. Don't, my life's treasure, don't let us make imaginary evils, when you know we have so many real ones to encounter. At worst, you know, if Miss Richland should consent, or my father refuse his pardon, it can but end in a trip to Scotland°; and—

Enter CROAKER

CROAKER. Where have you been, boy? I have been seeking you. My friend Honeywood here has been saying such comfortable things! Ah! he's an example indeed. Where is he? I left him here.

LEONTINE. Sir, I believe you may see him, and hear him, too, in the next room: he's preparing to go out with the ladies.

CROAKER. Good gracious! can I believe my eyes or my ears? I'm struck dumb with his vivacity, and stunned with the loudness of his laugh. Was there ever such a transformation! [*A laugh behind the scenes;*

CROAKER *mimics it.*] Ha! ha! ha! there it goes: a plague take their balderdash! yet I could expect nothing less, when my precious wife was of the party. On my conscience, I believe she could spread a horse-laugh through the pews of a tabernacle.

LEONTINE. Since you find so many objections to a wife, sir, how can you be so earnest in recommending one to me?

CROAKER. I have told you, and tell you again, boy, that Miss Richland's fortune must not go out of the family; one may find comfort in the money, whatever one does in the wife.

LEONTINE. But, sir, though, in obedience to your desire, I am ready to marry her, it may be possible she has no inclination to me.

CROAKER. I'll tell you once for all how it stands. A good part of Miss Richland's large fortune consists in a claim upon Government, which my good friend, Mr. Lofty, assures me the Treasury will allow. One half of this she is to forfeit, by her father's will, in case she refuses to marry you. So, if she rejects you, we seize half her fortune; if she accepts you, we seize the whole, and a fine girl into the bargain.

LEONTINE. But, sir, if you will listen to reason—

CROAKER. Come, then, produce your reasons. I tell you, I'm fixed, determined; so now produce your reasons. When I'm determined, I always listen to reason, because it can then do no harm.

LEONTINE. You have alleged that a mutual choice was the first requisite in matrimonial happiness.

CROAKER. Well, and you have both of you a mutual choice. She has her choice,—to marry you or lose half her fortune; and you have your choice,—to marry her, or pack out of doors without any fortune at all.

LEONTINE. An only son, sir, might expect more indulgence.

CROAKER. An only father, sir, might expect more obedience; besides, has not your sister here, that never disobliged me in her life, as good a right as you? He's a sad dog, Livy, my dear, and would take all from you. But he shan't: I tell you he shan't; for you shall have your share.

OLIVIA. Dear sir, I wish you'd be convinced, that I can never be happy in any addition to my fortune which is taken from his.

CROAKER. Well, well, it's a good child, so say no more; but come with me, and we shall see something that will give us a great deal of pleasure, I promise you—old Ruggins, the curry comb maker, lying in state.

I am told he makes a very handsome corpse, and becomes his coffin prodigiously. He was an intimate friend of mine, and these are friendly things we ought to do for each other.

[*Exeunt*

ACT II

SCENE I

Croaker's House

MISS RICHLAND, GARNET

MISS RICHLAND. Olivia not his sister? Olivia not Leontine's sister? You amaze me!

GARNET. No more his sister than I am; I had it all from his own servant; I can get anything from that quarter.

MISS RICHLAND. But how? Tell me again, Garnet.

GARNET. Why, madam, as I told you before, instead of going to Lyons to bring home his sister, who has been there with her aunt these ten years, he never went farther than Paris: there he saw and fell in love with this young lady,—by the bye, of a prodigious family.

MISS RICHLAND. And brought her home to my guardian as his daughter?

GARNET. Yes, and his daughter she will be. If he don't consent to their marriage, they talk of trying what a Scotch parson can do.

MISS RICHLAND. Well, I own they have deceived me.—And so demurely as Olivia carried it, too!—Would you believe it, Garnet, I told her all my secrets; and yet the sly cheat concealed all this from me?

GARNET. And, upon my word, madam, I don't much blame her: she was loath to trust one with her secrets that was so very bad at keeping her own.

MISS RICHLAND. But, to add to their deceit, the young gentleman, it seems, pretends to make me serious proposals. My guardian and he are to be here presently, to open the affair in form. You know I am to lose half my fortune if I refuse him.

GARNET. Yet, what can you do? For being, as you are, in love with Mr. Honeywood, madam—

MISS RICHLAND. How! idiot, what do you mean? In love with Mr. Honeywood! Is this to provoke me?

GARNET. That is, madam, in friendship with him: I meant nothing more than friendship, as I hope to be married—nothing more.

MISS RICHLAND. Well, no more of this! As to my guardian and his son, they shall find me prepared to receive them: I'm resolved

to accept their proposal with seeming pleasure, to mortify them by compliance, and so throw the refusal at last upon them.

GARNET. Delicious! and that will secure your whole fortune to yourself. Well, who could have thought so innocent a face could cover so much 'cuteness!

MISS RICHLAND. Why, girl, I only oppose my prudence to their cunning, and practise a lesson they have taught me against themselves.

GARNET. Then you're likely not long to want employment, for here they come, and in close conference.

Enter CROAKER *and* LEONTINE

LEONTINE. Excuse me, sir, if I seem to hesitate upon the point of putting to the lady so important a question.

CROAKER. Lord! good sir, moderate your fears; you're so plaguy shy, that one would think you had changed sexes. I tell you we must have the half or the whole. Come, let me see with what spirit you begin. Well, why don't you? Eh! What? Well then, I must, it seems.—Miss Richland, my dear, I believe you guess at our business; an affair which my son here comes to open, that nearly concerns your happiness.

MISS RICHLAND. Sir, I should be ungrate-

ful not to be pleased with anything that comes recommended by you.

CROAKER. How, boy, could you desire a finer opening? Why don't you begin, I say?

[*To* LEONTINE.]

LEONTINE. 'Tis true, madam, my father, madam, has some intentions—hem—of explaining an affair—which—himself can best explain, madam.

CROAKER. Yes, my dear; it comes entirely from my son; it's all a request of his own, madam. And I will permit him to make the best of it.

LEONTINE. The whole affair is only this, madam: my father has a proposal to make, which he insists none but himself shall deliver.

CROAKER. My mind misgives me, the fellow will never be brought on. [*Aside.*] In short, madam, you see before you one that loves you—one whose whole happiness is all in you.

MISS RICHLAND. I never had any doubts of your regard, sir; and I hope you can have none of my duty.

CROAKER. That's not the thing, my little sweeting; my love! No, no, another-guess lover than I: there he stands, madam; his very looks declare the force of his passion—Call up a look, you dog! [*Aside.*]—But then, had you seen him, as I have, weeping, speaking solilo-

quies and blank verse, sometimes melancholy, and sometimes absent—

MISS RICHLAND. I fear, sir, he's absent now; or such a declaration would have come most properly from himself.

CROAKER. Himself, madam! he would die before he could make such a confession; and if he had not a channel for his passion through me, it would ere now have drowned his understanding.

MISS RICHLAND. I must grant, sir, there are attractions in modest diffidence above the force of words. A silent address is the genuine eloquence of sincerity.

CROAKER. Madam, he has forgot to speak any other language; silence is become his mother-tongue.

MISS RICHLAND. And it must be confessed, sir, it speaks very powerfully in his favour. And yet I shall be thought too forward in making such a confession; shan't I, Mr. Leontine?

LEONTINE. Confusion! my reserve will undo me. But, if modesty attracts her, impudence may disgust her. I'll try. [*Aside.*] Don't imagine from my silence, madam, that I want a due sense of the honour and happiness intended me. My father, madam, tells me your humble servant is not totally indifferent to

you. He admires you: I adore you; and when we come together, upon my soul, I believe we shall be the happiest couple in all St. James's.

MISS RICHLAND. If I could flatter myself you thought as you speak, sir—

LEONTINE. Doubt my sincerity, madam? By your dear self I swear! Ask the brave if they desire glory; ask cowards if they covet safety—

CROAKER. Well, well, no more questions about it.

LEONTINE. Ask the sick if they long for health; ask misers if they love money; ask—

CROAKER. Ask a fool if he can talk nonsense! What's come over the boy? What signifies asking, when there's not a soul to give you an answer? If you would ask to the purpose, ask this lady's consent to make you happy.

MISS RICHLAND. Why, indeed, sir, his uncommon ardour almost compels me—forces me to comply.—And yet I'm afraid he'll despise a conquest gained with too much ease; won't you, Mr. Leontine?

LEONTINE. Confusion! [*Aside.*] Oh, by no means, madam, by no means. And yet, madam, you talked of force. There is nothing I would avoid so much as compulsion in a thing of this kind. No, madam, I will still be generous, and leave you at liberty to refuse.

CROAKER. But I tell you, sir, the lady is not at liberty. It's a match. You see she says nothing. Silence gives consent.

LEONTINE. But, sir, she talked of force. Consider, sir, the cruelty of constraining her inclinations.

CROAKER. But I say there's no cruelty. Don't you know, blockhead, that girls have always a round-about way of saying yes before company? So get you both gone together into the next room, and hang him that interrupts the tender explanation. Get you gone, I say; I'll not hear a word.

LEONTINE. But, sir, I must beg leave to insist—

CROAKER. Get off, you puppy, or I'll beg leave to insist upon knocking you down. Stupid whelp! But I don't wonder: the boy takes entirely after his mother.

[*Exeunt* MISS RICHLAND *and* LEONTINE

Enter MRS. CROAKER

MRS. CROAKER. Mr. Croaker, I bring you something, my dear, that I believe will make you smile.

CROAKER. I'll hold you a guinea of that, my dear.

MRS. CROAKER. A letter; and, as I knew the hand, I ventured to open it.

CROAKER. And how can you expect your breaking open my letters should give me pleasure?

MRS. CROAKER. Pooh! it's from your sister at Lyons, and contains good news: read it.

CROAKER. What a Frenchified cover is here! That sister of mine has some good qualities, but I could never teach her to fold a letter.

MRS. CROAKER. Fold a fiddlestick! Read what it contains.

CROAKER. [*reading*]

"DEAR NICK,—An English gentleman, of large fortune, has for some time made private, though honourable, proposals to your daughter Olivia. They love each other tenderly, and I find she has consented, without letting any of the family know, to crown his addresses. As such good offers don't come every day, your own good sense, his large fortune, and family considerations, will induce you to forgive her.

Yours ever,
RACHAEL CROAKER."

My daughter Olivia privately contracted to a man of large fortune! This is good news indeed. My heart never foretold me of this. And yet, how slyly the little baggage has carried it since she came home; not a word on't

to the old ones for the world. Yet I thought I saw something she wanted to conceal.

MRS. CROAKER. Well, if they have concealed their amour, they shan't conceal their wedding; that shall be public, I'm resolved.

CROAKER. I tell thee, woman, the wedding is the most foolish part of the ceremony. I can never get this woman to think of the most serious part of the nuptial engagement.

MRS. CROAKER. What, would you have me think of their funeral? But come, tell me, my dear, don't you owe more to me than you care to confess?—Would you have ever been known to Mr. Lofty, who has undertaken Miss Richland's claim at the Treasury, but for me? Who was it first made him an acquaintance at Lady Shabbaroon's rout? Who got him to promise us his interest? Is not he a back-stair favourite, one that can do what he pleases with those that do what they please? Is not he an acquaintance that all your groaning and lamentations could never have got us?

CROAKER. He is a man of importance, I grant you. And yet what amazes me is, that, while he is giving away places to all the world, he can't get one for himself.

MRS. CROAKER. That, perhaps, may be owing to his nicety. Great men are not easily satisfied.

Enter FRENCH SERVANT

SERVANT. An expresse from Monsieur Lofty. He vil be vait upon your honours instammant. He be only giving four five instruction, read two tree memorial, call upon von ambassadeur. He vil be vid you in one tree minutes.

MRS. CROAKER. You see now, my dear. What an extensive department! Well, friend, let your master know that we are extremely honoured by this honour. Was there anything ever in a higher style of breeding? All messages among the great are now done by express. [*Exit* FRENCH SERVANT

CROAKER. To be sure, no man does little things with more solemnity, or claims more respect, than he. But he's in the right on't. In our bad world, respect is given where respect is claimed.

MRS. CROAKER. Never mind the world, my dear; you were never in a pleasanter place in your life. Let us now think of receiving him with proper respect, [*a loud rapping at the door*] and there he is, by the thundering rap.

CROAKER. Ay, verily, there he is! as close upon the heels of his own express, as an endorsement upon the back of a bill. Well, I'll

Get off, you puppy, or I'll beg leave to insist on knocking you down!

leave you to receive him, whilst I go to chide my little Olivia for intending to steal a marriage without mine or her aunt's consent. I must seem to be angry, or she too may begin to despise my authority. [*Exit*

Enter LOFTY, *speaking to his* SERVANT

LOFTY. And if the Venetian ambassador, or that teasing creature the Marquis, should call, I'm not at home. Dam'me, I'll be packhorse to none of them.—My dear madam, I have just snatched a moment—And if the expresses to his Grace be ready, let them be sent off; they're of importance.—Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.

MRS. CROAKER. Sir, this honour—

LOFTY. And, Dubardieu! if the person calls about the commission, let him know that it is made out. As for Lord Cumbercourt's stale request, it can keep cold: you understand me. —Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.

MRS. CROAKER. Sir, this honour—

LOFTY. And, Dubardieu! if the man comes from the Cornish borough, you must do him; you must do him, I say—Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.—And if the Russian ambassador calls—but he will scarce call to-day, I believe.—And now, madam, I have just got time to express my happiness in having

the honour of being permitted to profess myself your most obedient, humble servant.

MRS. CROAKER. Sir, the happiness and honour are all mine; and yet, I'm only robbing the public while I detain you.

LOFTY. Sink the public, madam, when the fair are to be attended. Ah, could all my hours be so charmingly devoted! Sincerely, don't you pity us poor creatures in affairs? Thus it is eternally; solicited for places here, teased for pensions there, and courted everywhere. I know you pity me. Yes, I see you do.

MRS. CROAKER. Excuse me, sir, "Toils of empires pleasures are," as Waller says.

LOFTY. Waller, Waller; is he of the House?

MRS. CROAKER. The modern poet of that name, sir.

LOFTY. Oh, a modern! We men of business despise the moderns; and as for the ancients, we have no time to read them. Poetry is a pretty thing enough for our wives and daughters; but not for us. Why now, here I stand that know nothing of books. I say, madam, I know nothing of books; and yet, I believe, upon a land-carriage fishery,° a stamp act, or a jag-hire,° I can talk my two hours without feeling the want of them.

MRS. CROAKER. The world is no stranger to Mr. Lofty's eminence in every capacity.

LOFTY. I vow to gad, madam, you make me

blush. I'm nothing, nothing, nothing in the world; a mere obscure gentleman. To be sure, indeed, one or two of the present ministers are pleased to represent me as a formidable man. I know they are pleased to bespatter me at all their little dirty levees. Yet, upon my soul, I wonder what they see in me to treat me so! Measures, not men, have always been my mark; and I vow, by all that's honourable, my resentment has never done the men, as mere men, any manner of harm,—that is, as mere men.

MRS. CROAKER. What importance, and yet what modesty!

LOFTY. Oh, if you talk of modesty, madam, there, I own I'm accessible to praise: modesty is my foible: it was so the Duke of Brentford used to say of me. "I love Jack Lofty," he used to say; "no man has a finer knowledge of things; quite a man of information; and when he speaks upon his legs, by the Lord, he's prodigious—he scouts them! and yet all men have their faults: too much modesty is his," says his Grace.

MRS. CROAKER. And yet, I dare say, you don't want assurance when you come to solicit for your friends.

LOFTY. Oh, there, indeed, I'm in bronze. Apropos! I have just been mentioning Miss Richland's case to a certain personage; we

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must name no names. When I ask, I'm not to be put off, madam. No, no, I take my friend by the button. "A fine girl, sir; great justice in her case—A friend of mine—Borough interest. Business must be done, Mr. Secretary. I say, Mr. Secretary, her business must be done, sir." That's my way, madam.

MRS. CROAKER. Bless me! you said all this to the Secretary of State, did you?

LOFTY. I did not say the Secretary, did I? Well, curse it, since you have found me out, I will not deny it:—it was to the Secretary.

MRS. CROAKER. This was going to the fountain-head at once, not applying to the understrappers, as Mr. Honeywood would have had us.

LOFTY. Honeywood! he! he! He was, indeed, a fine solicitor. I suppose you have heard what has just happened to him?

MRS. CROAKER. Poor dear man! no accident, I hope?

LOFTY. Undone, madam, that's all. His creditors have taken him into custody—a prisoner in his own house!

MRS. CROAKER. A prisoner in his own house! How? At this very time? I'm quite unhappy for him.

LOFTY. Why, so am I. The man, to be sure, was immensely good-natured. But then, I could never find that he had anything in him.

MRS. CROAKER. His manner, to be sure, was excessive harmless; some, indeed, thought it a little dull. For my part, I always concealed my opinion.

LOFTY. It can't be concealed, madam; the man was dull, dull as the last new comedy! a poor impracticable creature! I tried once or twice to know if he was fit for business; but he had scarce talents to be groom-porter to an orange-barrow.

MRS. CROAKER. How differently does Miss Richland think of him! For, I believe, with all his faults, she loves him.

LOFTY. Loves him! does she? You should cure her of that, by all means. Let me see, what if she were sent to him this instant, in his present doleful situation? My life for it, that works her cure. Distress is a perfect antidote to love. Suppose we join her in the next room? Miss Richland is a fine girl, has a fine fortune, and must not be thrown away. Upon my honour, madam, I have a regard for Miss Richland; and, rather than she should be thrown away, I should think it no indignity to marry her myself. [*Exeunt*

Enter OLIVIA *and* LEONTINE

LEONTINE. And yet, trust me, Olivia, I had every reason to expect Miss Richland's re-

fusal, as I did everything in my power to deserve it. Her indelicacy surprises me!

OLIVIA. Sure, Leontine, there's nothing so indelicate in being sensible of your merit. If so, I fear I shall be the most guilty thing alive.

LEONTINE. But you mistake, my dear. The same attention I used to advance my merit with you, I practised to lessen it with her. What more could I do?

OLIVIA. Let us now rather consider what is to be done. We have both dissembled too long.—I have always been ashamed—I am now quite weary of it. Sure, I could never have undergone so much for any other but you.

LEONTINE. And you shall find my gratitude equal to your kindest compliance. Though our friends should totally forsake us, Olivia, we can draw upon content for the deficiencies of fortune.

OLIVIA. Then why should we defer our scheme of humble happiness, when it is now in our power? I may be the favourite of your father, it is true; but can it ever be thought that his present kindness to a supposed child will continue to a known deceiver?

LEONTINE. I have many reasons to believe it will. As his attachments are but few, they are lasting. His own marriage was a private

one, as ours may be. Besides, I have sounded him already at a distance, and find all his answers exactly to our wish. Nay, by an expression or two that dropped from him, I am induced to think he knows of this affair.

OLIVIA. Indeed! But that would be a happiness too great to be expected.

LEONTINE. However it be, I'm certain you have power over him; and am persuaded, if you informed him of our situation, that he would be disposed to pardon it.

OLIVIA. You had equal expectations, Leontine, from your last scheme with Miss Richland, which you find has succeeded most wretchedly.

LEONTINE. And that's the best reason for trying another.

OLIVIA. If it must be so, I submit.

LEONTINE. As we could wish, he comes this way. Now, my dearest Olivia, be resolute. I'll just retire within hearing, to come in at a proper time, either to share your danger, or confirm your victory. [*Exit*

Enter CROAKER

CROAKER. Yes, I must forgive her; and yet not too easily, neither. It will be proper to keep up the decorums of resentment a little,

if it be only to impress her with an idea of my authority.

OLIVIA. How I tremble to approach him!—Might I presume, sir,—if I interrupt you—

CROAKER. No, child, where I have an affection, it is not a little thing can interrupt me. Affection gets over little things.

OLIVIA. Sir, you're too kind. I'm sensible how ill I deserve this partiality; yet, Heaven knows, there is nothing I would not do to gain it.

CROAKER. And you have but too well succeeded, you little hussy, you. With those endearing ways of yours, on my conscience, I could be brought to forgive anything, unless it were a very great offence indeed.

OLIVIA. But mine is such an offence—When you know my guilt—Yes, you shall know it, though I feel the greatest pain in the confession.

CROAKER. Why, then, if it be so very great a pain, you may spare yourself the trouble; for I know every syllable of the matter before you begin.

OLIVIA. Indeed! then I'm undone.

CROAKER. Ay, miss, you wanted to steal a match, without letting me know it, did you? But I'm not worth being consulted, I suppose, when there's to be a marriage in my own family. No, I'm to have no hand in the dis-

posal of my own children! No, I'm nobody! I'm to be a mere article of family lumber; a piece of cracked china, to be stuck up in a corner.

OLIVIA. Dear sir, nothing but the dread of your authority could induce us to conceal it from you.

CROAKER. No, no, my consequence is no more; I'm as little minded as a dead Russian in winter, just stuck up with a pipe in its mouth till there comes a thaw.—It goes to my heart to vex her. [*Aside.*]

OLIVIA. I was prepared, sir, for your anger, and despaired of pardon, even while I presumed to ask it. But your severity shall never abate my affection, as my punishment is but justice.

CROAKER. And yet you should not despair, neither, Livy. We ought to hope all for the best.

OLIVIA. And do you permit me to hope, sir? Can I ever expect to be forgiven? But hope has too long deceived me.

CROAKER. Why then, child, it shan't deceive you now, for I forgive you this very moment. I forgive you all; and now you are indeed my daughter!

OLIVIA. Oh, transport! this kindness overpowers me.

CROAKER. I was always against severity to

our children. We have been young and giddy ourselves, and we can't expect boys and girls to be old before their time.

OLIVIA. What generosity! But can you forget the many falsehoods, the dissimulation—

CROAKER. You did indeed dissemble, you urchin, you; but where's the girl that won't dissemble for a husband? My wife and I had never been married, if we had not dissembled a little beforehand.

OLIVIA. It shall be my future care never to put such generosity to a second trial. And as for the partner of my offence and folly, from his native honour, and the just sense he has of his duty, I can answer for him that—

Enter LEONTINE

LEONTINE. Permit him thus to answer for himself. [*Kneeling.*] Thus, sir, let me speak my gratitude for this unmerited forgiveness. Yes, sir, this even exceeds all your former tenderness: I now can boast the most indulgent of fathers. The life he gave, compared to this, was but a trifling blessing.

CROAKER. And, good sir, who sent for you, with that fine tragedy face, and flourishing manner? I don't know what we have to do with your gratitude upon this occasion.

LEONTINE. How, sir! is it possible to be

silent, when so much obliged? Would you refuse me the pleasure of being grateful? of adding my thanks to my Olivia's? of sharing in the transports that you have thus occasioned?

CROAKER. Lord, sir, we can be happy enough without your coming in to make up the party. I don't know what's the matter with the boy all this day; he has got into such a rhodomontade manner all this morning!

LEONTINE. But, sir, I that have so large a part in the benefit, is it not my duty to show my joy? Is the being admitted to your favour so slight an obligation? Is the happiness of marrying my Olivia so small a blessing?

CROAKER. Marrying Olivia! marrying Olivia! marrying his own sister! Sure the boy is out of his senses. His own sister!

LEONTINE. My sister!

OLIVIA. Sister! how have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*]

LEONTINE. Some cursed mistake in all this, I find. [*Aside.*]

CROAKER. What does the booby mean? or has he any meaning? Eh, what do you mean, you blockhead, you?

LEONTINE. Mean, sir?—why, sir—only when my sister is to be married, that I have the pleasure of marrying her, sir; that is,

of giving her away, sir—I have made a point of it.

CROAKER. Oh, is that all? Give her away. You have made a point of it? Then you had as good make a point of first giving away yourself, as I'm going to prepare the writings between you and Miss Richland this very minute. What a fuss is here about nothing! Why, what's the matter now? I thought I had made you at least as happy as you could wish.

OLIVIA. Oh, yes, sir; very happy.

CROAKER. Do you foresee anything, child? You look as if you did. I think if anything was to be foreseen, I have as sharp a look-out as another; and yet I foresee nothing. [*Exit*

OLIVIA. What can it mean?

LEONTINE. He knows something, and yet, for my life, I can't tell what.

OLIVIA. It can't be the connection between us, I'm pretty certain.

LEONTINE. Whatever it be, my dearest, I'm resolved to put it out of fortune's power to repeat our mortification. I'll haste and prepare for our journey to Scotland this very evening. My friend Honeywood has promised me his advice and assistance. I'll go to him, and repose our distresses on his friendly bosom; and I know so much of his honest heart,

that if he can't relieve our uneasinesses, he will at least share them. [*Exeunt*

ACT III

SCENE I

Young Honeywood's House

BAILIFF, HONEYWOOD, FOLLOWER

BAILIFF. Lookye, sir, I have arrested as good men as you in my time—no disparagement of you neither—men that would go forty guineas on a game of cribbage. I challenge the town to show a man in more genteeler practice than myself.

HONEYWOOD. Without all question, Mr. — I forget your name, sir.

BAILIFF. How can you forget what you never knew? he! he! he!

HONEYWOOD. May I beg leave to ask your name?

BAILIFF. Yes, you may.

HONEYWOOD. Then pray, sir, what is your name?

BAILIFF. That I didn't promise to tell you.—He! he! he!—A joke breaks no bones, as we say among us that practise the law.

HONEYWOOD. You may have reason for keeping it a secret, perhaps?

BAILIFF. The law does nothing without reason. I'm ashamed to tell my name to no man, sir. If you can show cause, as why, upon a special capus, that I should prove my name—but come, Timothy Twitch is my name. And, now you know my name, what have you to say to that?

HONEYWOOD. Nothing in the world, good Mr. Twitch, but that I have a favour to ask, that's all.

BAILIFF. Ay, favours are more easily asked than granted, as we say among us that practise the law. I have taken an oath against granting favours. Would you have me perjure myself?

HONEYWOOD. But my request will come recommended in so strong a manner, as, I believe, you'll have no scruple. [*Pulling out his purse.*] The thing is only this: I believe I shall be able to discharge this trifle in two or three days at farthest; but as I would not have the affair known for the world, I have thoughts of keeping you, and your good friend here, about me, till the debt is discharged; for which I shall be properly grateful.

BAILIFF. Oh! that's another maxum, and altogether within my oath. For certain, if an honest man is to get anything by a thing, there's

no reason why all things should not be done in civility.

HONEYWOOD. Doubtless, all trades must live, Mr. Twitch; and yours is a necessary one.

Gives him money.

BAILIFF. Oh! your honour; I hope your honour takes nothing amiss as I does, as I does nothing but my duty in so doing. I'm sure no man can say I ever give a gentleman, that was a gentleman, ill usage. If I saw that a gentleman was a gentleman, I have taken money not to see him for ten weeks together.

HONEYWOOD. Tenderness is a virtue, Mr. Twitch.

BAILIFF. Ay, sir, it's a perfect treasure. I love to see a gentleman with a tender heart. I don't know, but I think I have a tender heart myself. If all that I have lost by my heart was put together, it would make a—but no matter for that.

HONEYWOOD. Don't account it lost, Mr. Twitch. The ingratitude of the world can never deprive us of the conscious happiness of having acted with humanity ourselves.

BAILIFF. Humanity, sir, is a jewel. It's better than gold. I love humanity. People may say, that we in our way have no humanity; but I'll show you my humanity this moment. There's my follower here, little Flanigan, with

a wife and four children—a guinea or two would be more to him, than twice as much to another. Now, as I can't show him an humanity myself, I must beg leave you'll do it for me.

HONEYWOOD. I assure you, Mr. Twitch, yours is a most powerful recommendation.

[*Giving money to the follower.*]

BAILIFF. Sir, you're a gentleman. I see you know what to do with your money. But, to business: we are to be with you here as your friends, I suppose. But set in case company comes. Little Flanigan here, to be sure, has a good face; a very good face; but then, he is a little seedy, as we say among us that practise the law. Not well in clothes. Smoke° the pocket-holes.

HONEYWOOD. Well, that shall be remedied without delay.

Enter SERVANT

SERVANT. Sir, Miss Richland is below.

HONEYWOOD. How unlucky! Detain her a moment. We must improve, my good friend, little Mr. Flanigan's appearance first. Here, let Mr. Flanigan have a suit of my clothes—quick—the brown and silver—Do you hear?

SERVANT. That your honour gave away to

the begging gentleman that makes verses, because it was as good as new.

HONEYWOOD. The white and gold, then.

SERVANT. That, your honour, I made bold to sell, because it was good for nothing.

HONEYWOOD. Well, the first that comes to hand, then. The blue and gold. I believe Mr. Flanigan would look best in blue.

[*Exit* FLANIGAN

BAILIFF. Rabbit me! but little Flanigan will look well in anything. Ah! if your honour knew that bit of flesh as well as I do, you'd be perfectly in love with him. There's not a prettier scout in the four counties after a shy-cock than he: scents like a hound—sticks like a weasel. He was master of the ceremonies to the black Queen of Morocco,° when I took him to follow me. [*Re-enter* FLANIGAN.] Heh! ecod, I think he looks so well, that I don't care if I have a suit from the same place for myself.

HONEYWOOD. Well, well, I hear the lady coming. Dear Mr. Twitch, I beg you'll give your friend directions not to speak. As for yourself, I know you will say nothing without being directed.

BAILIFF. Never you fear me; I'll show the lady I have something to say for myself as well as another. One man has one way of talking, another man has another, that's all the difference between them.

Enter MISS RICHLAND *and her* MAID

MISS RICHLAND. You'll be surprised, sir, with this visit. But, you know, I'm yet to thank you for choosing my little library.

HONEYWOOD. Thanks, madam, are unnecessary; as it was I that was obliged by your commands. Chairs here. Two of my very good friends, Mr. Twitch and Mr. Flanigan. Pray, gentlemen, sit without ceremony.

MISS RICHLAND. Who can these odd-looking men be? I fear it is as I was informed. It must be so. [*Aside.*]

BAILIFF. [*After a pause.*] Pretty weather; very pretty weather for the time of the year, madam.

FOLLOWER. Very good circuit weather in the country.

HONEYWOOD. You officers are generally favourites among the ladies. My friends, madam, have been upon very disagreeable duty, I assure you. The fair should, in some measure, recompense the toils of the brave.

MISS RICHLAND. Our officers do indeed deserve every favour. The gentlemen are in the marine service, I presume, sir?

HONEYWOOD. Why, madam, they do—occasionally serve in the fleet, madam. A dangerous service!

MISS RICHLAND. I'm told so. And I own it has often surprised me, that while we have had so many instances of bravery there, we have had so few of wit at home to praise it.

HONEYWOOD. I grant, madam, that our poets have not written as our sailors have fought; but they have done all they could, and Hawke or Amherst° could do no more.

MISS RICHLAND. I'm quite displeased when I see a fine subject spoiled by a dull writer.

HONEYWOOD. We should not be so severe against dull writers, madam. It is ten to one, but the dullest writer exceeds the most rigid French critic who presumes to despise him.

FOLLOWER. Damn the French, the parle vous, and all that belongs to them!

MISS RICHLAND. Sir!

HONEYWOOD. Ha! ha! ha! honest Mr. Flanigan! A true English officer, madam; he's not contented with beating the French, but he will scold them too.

MISS RICHLAND. Yet, Mr. Honeywood, this does not convince me but that severity in criticism is necessary. It was our first adopting the severity of French taste, that has brought them in turn to taste us.

BAILIFF. Taste us! By the Lord, madam, they devour us! Give Monseers but a taste, and I'll be damn'd but they come in for a belly-full.

MISS RICHLAND. Very extraordinary this!

FOLLOWER. But very true. What makes the bread rising? the parle vous that devour us. What makes the mutton fivepence a pound? the parle vous that eat it up. What makes the beer threepence-halfpenny a pot?—

HONEYWOOD. Ah! the vulgar rogues; all will be out. [*Aside.*] Right, gentlemen, very right, upon my word, and quite to the purpose. They draw a parallel, madam, between the mental taste and that of our senses. We are injured as much by the French severity in the one, as by French rapacity in the other. That's their meaning.

MISS RICHLAND. Though I don't see the force of the parallel, yet I'll own, that we should sometimes pardon books, as we do our friends, that have now and then agreeable absurdities to recommend them.

BAILIFF. That's all my eye. The King only can pardon, as the law says: for, set in case—

HONEYWOOD. I'm quite of your opinion, sir. I see the whole drift of your argument. Yes, certainly, our presuming to pardon any work is arrogating a power that belongs to another. If all have power to condemn, what writer can be free?

BAILIFF. By his habus corpus. His habus corpus can set him free at any time: for, set in case—

HONEYWOOD. I'm obliged to you, sir, for the

hint. If, madam, as my friend observes, our laws are so careful of a gentleman's person, sure we ought to be equally careful of his dearer part, his fame.

FOLLOWER. Ay, but if so be a man's nabb'd, you know—

HONEYWOOD. Mr. Flanigan, if you spoke forever, you could not improve the last observation. For my own part, I think it conclusive.

BAILIFF. As for the matter of that, mayhap—

HONEYWOOD. Nay, sir, give me leave, in this instance, to be positive. For where is the necessity of censuring works without genius, which must shortly sink of themselves? what is it, but aiming an unnecessary blow against a victim already under the hands of justice?

BAILIFF. Justice! Oh, by the elevens! if you talk about justice, I think I am at home there: for, in a course of law—

HONEYWOOD. My dear Mr. Twitch, I discern what you'd be at perfectly; and I believe the lady must be sensible of the art with which it is introduced. I suppose you perceive the meaning, madam, of his course of law.

MISS RICHLAND. I protest, sir, I do not. I perceive only that you answer one gentleman before he has finished, and the other before he has well begun.

BAILIFF. Madam, you are a gentlewoman, and I will make the matter out. This here ques-

tion is about severity, and justice, and pardon, and the like of they. Now, to explain the thing—

HONEYWOOD. Oh! curse your explanations! [*Aside.*]

Enter SERVANT

SERVANT. Mr. Leontine, sir, below, desires to speak with you upon earnest business.

HONEYWOOD. That's lucky. [*Aside.*] Dear madam, you'll excuse me and my good friends here, for a few minutes. There are books, madam, to amuse you. Come, gentlemen, you know I make no ceremony with such friends. After you, sir. Excuse me. Well, if I must. But I know your natural politeness.

BAILIFF. Before and behind, you know.

FOLLOWER. Ay, ay, before and behind, before and behind.

[*Exeunt* HONEYWOOD, BAILIFF, *and* FOLLOWER

MISS RICHLAND. What can all this mean, Garnet?

GARNET. Mean, madam! why, what should it mean, but what Mr. Lofty sent you here to see? These people he calls officers, are officers sure enough: sheriff's officers; bailiffs, madam.

MISS RICHLAND. Ay, it is certainly so. Well, though his perplexities are far from giving me pleasure, yet I own there is something very

Oh perfectly; you courtiers can do anything, I see.

ridiculous in them, and a just punishment for his dissimulation.

GARNET. And so they are. But I wonder, madam, that the lawyer you just employed to pay his debts, and set him free, has not done it by this time. He ought at least to have been here before now. But lawyers are always more ready to get a man into troubles than out of them.

Enter SIR WILLIAM

SIR WILLIAM. For Miss Richland to undertake setting him free, I own, was quite unexpected. It has totally unhinged my schemes to reclaim him. Yet it gives me pleasure to find, that among a number of worthless friendships, he has made one acquisition of real value; for there must be some softer passion on her side, that prompts this generosity. Ha! here before me? I'll endeavour to sound her affections. Madam, as I am the person that have had some demands upon the gentleman of this house, I hope you'll excuse me, if, before I enlarged him, I wanted to see yourself.

MISS RICHLAND. The precaution was very unnecessary, sir. I suppose your wants were only such as my agent had power to satisfy.

SIR WILLIAM. Partly, madam. But I was also willing you should be fully apprized of the

character of the gentleman you intended to serve.

MISS RICHLAND. It must come, sir, with a very ill grace from you. To censure it, after what you have done, would look like malice; and to speak favourably of a character you have oppressed, would be impeaching your own. And sure, his tenderness, his humanity, his universal friendship, may atone for many faults.

SIR WILLIAM. That friendship, madam, which is exerted in too wide a sphere, becomes totally useless. Our bounty, like a drop of water, disappears when diffused too widely. They who pretend most to this universal benevolence are either deceivers or dupes,—men who desire to cover their private ill-nature by a pretended regard for all, or men who, reasoning themselves into false feelings, are more earnest in pursuit of splendid, than of useful virtues.

MISS RICHLAND. I am surprised, sir, to hear one, who has probably been a gainer by the folly of others, so severe in his censure of it.

SIR WILLIAM. Whatever I may have gained by folly, madam, you see I am willing to prevent your losing by it.

MISS RICHLAND. Your cares for me, sir, are unnecessary. I always suspect those services

which are denied where they are wanted, and offered, perhaps, in hopes of a refusal. No, sir, my directions have been given, and I insist upon their being complied with.

SIR WILLIAM. Thou amiable woman! I can no longer contain the expressions of my gratitude, my pleasure. You see before you one who has been equally careful of his interest; one who has for some time been a concealed spectator of his follies, and only punished in hopes to reclaim him,—his uncle!

MISS RICHLAND. Sir William Honeywood! You amaze me. How shall I conceal my confusion? I fear, sir, you'll think I have been too forward in my services. I confess I—

SIR WILLIAM. Don't make any apologies, madam. I only find myself unable to repay the obligation. And yet, I have been trying my interest of late to serve you. Having learnt, madam, that you had some demands upon Government, I have, though unasked, been your solicitor there.

MISS RICHLAND. Sir, I'm infinitely obliged to your intentions. But my guardian has employed another gentleman, who assures him of success.

SIR WILLIAM. Who, the important little man that visits here? Trust me, madam, he's

quite contemptible among men in power, and utterly unable to serve you. Mr. Lofty's promises are much better known to people of fashion than his person, I assure you.

MISS RICHLAND. How have we been deceived! As sure as can be, here he comes.

SIR WILLIAM. Does he? Remember, I'm to continue unknown. My return to England has not as yet been made public. With what impudence he enters!

Enter LOFTY

LOFTY. Let the chariot—let my chariot drive off; I'll visit to his Grace's in a chair. Miss Richland here before me! Punctual, as usual, to the calls of humanity. I'm very sorry, madam, things of this kind should happen, especially to a man I have shown everywhere, and carried amongst us as a particular acquaintance.

MISS RICHLAND. I find, sir, you have the art of making the misfortunes of others your own.

LOFTY. My dear madam, what can a private man like me do? One man can't do everything; and then, I do so much in this way every day. Let me see, something considerable might be done for him by subscription; it could

not fail if I carried the list. I'll undertake to set down a brace of dukes, two dozen lords, and half the lower House, at my own peril.

SIR WILLIAM. And, after all, it's more than probable, sir, he might reject the offer of such powerful patronage.

LOFTY. Then, madam, what can we do? You know I never make promises. In truth, I once or twice tried to do something with him in the way of business; but, as I often told his uncle, Sir William Honeywood, the man was utterly impracticable.

SIR WILLIAM. His uncle! then that gentleman, I suppose, is a particular friend of yours.

LOFTY. Meaning me, sir?—Yes, madam, as I often said, "My dear Sir William, you are sensible I would do anything, as far as my poor interest goes, to serve your family: but what can be done? there's no procuring first-rate places for ninth-rate abilities."

MISS RICHLAND. I have heard of Sir William Honeywood; he's abroad in employment: he confided in your judgment, I suppose?

LOFTY. Why, yes, madam; I believe Sir William had some reason to confide in my judgment; one little reason, perhaps.

MISS RICHLAND. Pray, sir, what was it?

LOFTY. Why, madam—but let it go no further—it was I procured him his place.

SIR WILLIAM. Did you, sir?

LOFTY. Either you or I, sir.

MISS RICHLAND. This, Mr. Lofty, was very kind indeed.

LOFTY. I did love him, to be sure; he had some amusing qualities; no man was fitter to be a toastmaster to a club, or had a better head.

MISS RICHLAND. A better head?

LOFTY. Ay, at a bottle. To be sure he was as dull as a choice spirit; but hang it, he was grateful, very grateful; and gratitude hides a multitude of faults.

SIR WILLIAM. He might have reason, perhaps. His place is pretty considerable, I'm told.

LOFTY. A trifle, a mere trifle among us men of business. The truth is, he wanted dignity to fill up a greater.

SIR WILLIAM. Dignity of person, do you mean, sir? I'm told he's much about my size and figure, sir?

LOFTY. Ay, tall enough for a marching regiment; but then he wanted a something—a consequence of form—a kind of a—I believe the lady perceives my meaning.

MISS RICHLAND. Oh, perfectly! you courtiers can do anything, I see.

LOFTY. My dear madam, all this is but a mere exchange; we do greater things for one another every day. Why, as thus, now: let me suppose you the First Lord of the Treasury;

you have an employment in you that I want; I have a place in me that you want; do me here, do you there: interest of both sides, few words, flat, done and done, and it's over.

SIR WILLIAM. A thought strikes me. [*Aside.*]—Now you mention Sir William Honeywood, madam; and as he seems, sir, an acquaintance of yours, you'll be glad to hear he is arrived from Italy: I had it from a friend who knows him as well as he does me, and you may depend on my information.

LOFTY. [*Aside.*] The devil he is! If I had known that, we should not have been quite so well acquainted.

SIR WILLIAM. He is certainly returned; and as this gentleman is a friend of yours, he can be of signal service to us, by introducing me to him: there are some papers relative to your affairs that require despatch, and his inspection.

MISS RICHLAND. This gentleman, Mr. Lofty, is a person employed in my affairs: I know you'll serve us.

LOFTY. My dear madam, I live but to serve you. Sir William shall even wait upon him, if you think proper to command it.

SIR WILLIAM. That would be quite unnecessary.

LOFTY. Well, we must introduce you then. Call upon me—let me see—ay, in two days.

SIR WILLIAM. Now, or the opportunity will be lost forever.

LOFTY. Well, if it must be now, now let it be. But damn it, that's unfortunate: my Lord Grig's cursed Pensacola business comes on this very hour, and I'm engaged to attend—another time—

SIR WILLIAM. A short letter to Sir William will do.

LOFTY. You shall have it; yet, in my opinion, a letter is a very bad way of going to work; face to face, that's my way.

SIR WILLIAM. The letter, sir, will do quite as well.

LOFTY. Zounds! sir, do you pretend to direct me in the business of office? Do you know me, sir? who am I?

MISS RICHLAND. Dear Mr. Lofty, this request is not so much his as mine; if my commands—but you despise my power.

LOFTY. Delicate creature! your commands could even control a debate at midnight: to a power so constitutional, I am all obedience and tranquillity. He shall have a letter: where is my secretary? Dubardieu! And yet, I protest, I don't like this way of doing business. I think if I spoke first to Sir William—but you will have it so. [*Exit with* MISS RICHLAND

SIR WILLIAM. [*Alone.*] Ha! ha! ha! This,

too, is one of my nephew's hopeful associates. O vanity! thou constant deceiver, how do all thy efforts to exalt serve but to sink us! Thy false colourings, like those employed to heighten beauty, only seem to mend that bloom which they contribute to destroy. I'm not displeased at this interview; exposing this fellow's impudence to the contempt it deserves may be of use to my design; at least, if he can reflect, it will be of use to himself. [*Enter* JARVIS.] How now, Jarvis, where's your master, my nephew?

JARVIS. At his wit's end, I believe: he's scarce gotten out of one scrape, but he's running his head into another.

SIR WILLIAM. How so?

JARVIS. The house has but just been cleared of the bailiffs, and now he's again engaging, tooth and nail, in assisting old Croaker's son to patch up a clandestine match with the young lady that passes in the house for his sister.

SIR WILLIAM. Ever busy to serve others.

JARVIS. Ay, anybody but himself. The young couple, it seems, are just setting out for Scotland; and he supplies them with money for the journey.

SIR WILLIAM. Money! how is he able to supply others who has scarce any for himself?

JARVIS. Why, there it is: he has no money,

that's true; but then, as he never said *No* to any request in his life, he has given them a bill, drawn by a friend of his upon a merchant in the city, which I am to get changed; for you must know that I am to go with them to Scotland myself.

SIR WILLIAM. How?

JARVIS. It seems the young gentleman is obliged to take a different road from his mistress, as he is to call upon an uncle of his that lives out of the way, in order to prepare a place for their reception, when they return; so they have borrowed me from my master, as the properest person to attend the young lady down.

SIR WILLIAM. To the land of matrimony! A pleasant journey, Jarvis.

JARVIS. Ay, but I'm only to have all the fatigues on't.

SIR WILLIAM. Well, it may be shorter, and less fatiguing, than you imagine. I know but too much of the young lady's family and connections, whom I have seen abroad. I have also discovered that Miss Richland is not indifferent to my thoughtless nephew; and will endeavour, though I fear in vain, to establish that connection. But, come, the letter I wait for must be almost finished; I'll let you farther into my intentions in the next room. [*Exeunt*

ACT IV

SCENE I

Croaker's House

Enter LOFTY

LOFTY. Well, sure the devil's in me of late, for running my head into such defiles, as nothing but a genius like my own could draw me from. I was formerly contented to husband out my places and pensions with some degree of frugality; but, curse it, of late I have given away the whole Court Register in less time than they could print the title-page; yet, hang it, why scruple a lie or two to come at a fine girl, when I every day tell a thousand for nothing. Ha! Honeywood here before me. Could Miss Richland have set him at liberty?

Enter HONEYWOOD

Mr. Honeywood, I'm glad to see you abroad again. I find my concurrence was not necessary in your unfortunate affairs. I had put things in a train to do your business; but it is not for me to say what I intended doing.

HONEYWOOD. It was unfortunate, indeed, sir. But what adds to my uneasiness is, that while you seem to be acquainted with my misfortune, I myself continue still a stranger to my benefactor.

LOFTY. How! not know the friend that served you?

HONEYWOOD. Can't guess at the person.

LOFTY. Inquire.

HONEYWOOD. I have; but all I can learn is, that he chooses to remain concealed, and that all inquiry must be fruitless.

LOFTY. Must be fruitless?

HONEYWOOD. Absolutely fruitless.

LOFTY. Sure of that?

HONEYWOOD. Very sure.

LOFTY. Then I'll be damn'd if you shall ever know it from me.

HONEYWOOD. How, sir?

LOFTY. I suppose now, Mr. Honeywood, you think my rent-roll very considerable, and that I have vast sums of money to throw away; I know you do. The world, to be sure, says such things of me.

HONEYWOOD. The world, by what I learn, is no stranger to your generosity. But where does this tend?

LOFTY. To nothing—nothing in the world. The town, to be sure, when it makes such a thing as me the subject of conversation, has

asserted, that I never yet patronized a man of merit.

HONEYWOOD. I have heard instances to the contrary, even from yourself.

LOFTY. Yes, Honeywood; and there are instances to the contrary, that you shall never hear from myself.

HONEYWOOD. Ha! dear sir, permit me to ask you but one question.

LOFTY. Sir, ask me no questions; I say, sir, ask me no questions; I'll be damn'd if I answer them.

HONEYWOOD. I will ask no further. My friend! my benefactor! it is, it must be here, that I am indebted for freedom—for honour. Yes, thou worthiest of men, from the beginning I suspected it, but was afraid to return thanks; which, if undeserved, might seem reproaches.

LOFTY. I protest I do not understand all this, Mr. Honeywood: you treat me very cavalierly. I do assure you, sir.—Blood, sir, can't a man be permitted to enjoy the luxury of his own feelings, without all this parade?

HONEYWOOD. Nay, do not attempt to conceal an action that adds to your honour. Your looks, your air, your manner, all confess it.

LOFTY. Confess it, sir! Torture itself, sir, shall never bring me to confess it. Mr. Honeywood, I have admitted you upon terms of friendship. Don't let us fall out; make me

happy, and let this be buried in oblivion. You know I hate ostentation; you know I do. Come, come, Honeywood, you know I always loved to be a friend, and not a patron. I beg this may make no kind of distance between us. Come, come, you and I must be more familiar—indeed we must.

HONEYWOOD. Heavens! Can I ever repay such friendship? Is there any way? Thou best of men, can I ever return the obligation?

LOFTY. A bagatelle, a mere bagatelle! But I see your heart is labouring to be grateful. You shall be grateful. It would be cruel to disappoint you.

HONEYWOOD. How! teach me the manner. Is there any way?

LOFTY. From this moment you're mine. Yes, my friend, you shall know it—I'm in love.

HONEYWOOD. And can I assist you?

LOFTY. Nobody so well.

HONEYWOOD. In what manner? I'm all impatience.

LOFTY. You shall make love for me.

HONEYWOOD. And to whom shall I speak in your favour?

LOFTY. To a lady with whom you have a great interest, I assure you: Miss Richland.

HONEYWOOD. Miss Richland!

LOFTY. Yes, Miss Richland. She has struck the blow, up to the hilt in my bosom, by Jupiter!

HONEYWOOD. Heavens! was ever anything more unfortunate! It is too much to be endured.

LOFTY. Unfortunate, indeed! And yet I can endure it, till you have opened the affair to her for me. Between ourselves, I think she likes me. I'm not apt to boast, but I think she does.

HONEYWOOD. Indeed! But do you know the person you apply to?

LOFTY. Yes, I know you are her friend and mine: that's enough. To you, therefore, I commit the success of my passion. I'll say no more, let friendship do the rest. I have only to add, that if at any time my little interest can be of service—but, hang it, I'll make no promises: you know my interest is yours at any time. No apologies, my friend, I'll not be answered; it shall be so. [*Exit*

HONEYWOOD. Open, generous, unsuspecting man! He little thinks that I love her too; and with such an ardent passion! But then it was ever but a vain and hopeless one; my torment, my persecution! What shall I do? Love, friendship; a hopeless passion, a deserving friend! Love that has been my tormentor; a friend, that has, perhaps, distressed himself to serve me. It shall be so. Yes, I will discard the fondling hope from my bosom, and exert all my influence in his favour. And yet to see her in the possession of another!—Insupportable!

But then to betray a generous, trusting friend! —Worse, worse! Yes, I'm resolved. Let me but be the instrument of their happiness, and then quit a country, where I must forever despair of finding my own. [*Exit*

Enter OLIVIA *and* GARNET, *who carries a milliner's box*

OLIVIA. Dear me, I wish this journey were over. No news of Jarvis yet? I believe the old peevish creature delays purely to vex me.

GARNET. Why, to be sure, madam, I did hear him say, a little snubbing before marriage would teach you to bear it the better afterwards.

OLIVIA. To be gone a full hour, though he had only to get a bill changed in the city! How provoking!

GARNET. I'll lay my life, Mr. Leontine, that had twice as much to do, is setting off by this time from his inn; and here you are left behind.

OLIVIA. Well, let us be prepared for his coming, however. Are you sure you have omitted nothing, Garnet?

GARNET. Not a stick, madam; all's here. Yet I wish you could take the white and silver to be married in. It's the worst luck in the world in anything but white. I knew one Bett Stubbs,

of our town, that was married in red; and, as sure as eggs is eggs, the bridegroom and she had a miff before morning.

OLIVIA. No matter; I'm all impatience till we are out of the house.

GARNET. Bless me, madam, I had almost forgot the wedding ring! The sweet little thing. I don't think it would go on my little finger. And what if I put in a gentleman's night-cap, in case of necessity, madam?—But here's Jarvis.

Enter JARVIS

OLIVIA. O Jarvis, are you come at last! We have been ready this half hour. Now let's be going. Let us fly!

JARVIS. Ay, to Jericho; for we shall have no going to Scotland this bout, I fancy.

OLIVIA. How! what's the matter?

JARVIS. Money, money is the matter, madam. We have got no money. What the plague do you send me on your fool's errand for? My master's bill upon the city is not worth a rush. Here it is; Mrs. Garnet may pin up her hair with it.

OLIVIA. Undone! How could Honeywood serve us so! What shall we do? Can't we go without it?

JARVIS. Go to Scotland without money! To

Scotland without money! Lord, how some people understand geography! We might as well set sail for Patagonia upon a cork-jacket.

OLIVIA. Such a disappointment! What a base, insincere man was your master, to serve us in this manner! Is this his good-nature?

JARVIS. Nay, don't talk ill of my master, madam; I won't bear to hear anybody talk ill of him but myself.

GARNET. Bless us! now I think on't, madam, you need not be under any uneasiness: I saw Mr. Leontine receive forty guineas from his father just before he set out, and he can't yet have left the inn. A short letter will reach him there.

OLIVIA. Well remembered, Garnet: I'll write immediately. How's this! Bless me, my hand trembles so I can't write a word. Do you write, Garnet; and, upon second thought, it will be better from you.

GARNET. Truly, madam, I write and indite but poorly. I never was 'cute at my learning. But I'll do what I can to please you. Let me see. All out of my own head, I suppose?

OLIVIA. Whatever you please.

GARNET. [*Writing.*] "Muster Croaker"—Twenty guineas, madam?

OLIVIA. Ay, twenty will do.

GARNET. "At the bar of the Talbot till called for.—Expedition—Will be blown up—All of

a flame—Quick, despatch—Cupid, the little god of love."—I conclude it, madam, with Cupid: I love to see a love-letter end like poetry.

OLIVIA. Well, well, what you please, anything. But how shall we send it? I can trust none of the servants of this family.

GARNET. Odso, madam, Mr. Honeywood's butler is in the next room: he's a dear, sweet man; he'll do anything for me.

JARVIS. He! the dog, he'll certainly commit some blunder. He's drunk and sober ten times a-day.

OLIVIA. No matter. Fly, Garnet: anybody we can trust will do. [*Exit* GARNET] Well, Jarvis, now we can have nothing more to interrupt us. You may take up the things, and carry them on to the inn. Have you no hands, Jarvis?

JARVIS. Soft and fair, young lady. You that are going to be married think things can never be done too fast; but we, that are old, and know what we are about, must elope methodically, madam.

OLIVIA. Well, sure, if my indiscretions were to be done over again—

JARVIS. My life for it, you would do them ten times over.

OLIVIA. Why will you talk so? If you knew how unhappy they make me—

JARVIS. Very unhappy, no doubt: I was

once just as unhappy when I was going to be married myself. I'll tell you a story about that—

OLIVIA. A story! when I am all impatience to be away! Was there ever such a dilatory creature!—

JARVIS. Well, madam, if we must march, why we will march; that's all. Though, odds-bobs, we have still forgot one thing we should never travel without—a case of good razors, and a box of shaving-powder. But no matter, I believe we shall be pretty well shaved by the way. [*Going*

Enter GARNET

GARNET. Undone, undone, madam! Ah, Mr. Jarvis, you said right enough. As sure as death, Mr. Honeywood's rogue of a drunken butler dropped the letter before he went ten yards from the door. There's old Croaker has just picked it up, and is this moment reading it to himself in the hall.

OLIVIA. Unfortunate! we shall be discovered.

GARNET. No, madam; don't be uneasy: he can make neither head nor tail of it. To be sure, he looks as if he was broke loose from Bedlam about it, but he can't find what it means for all that. O lud, he is coming this way all in the horrors!

Oh Jarvis, are you come at last?

OLIVIA. Then let us leave the house this instant, for fear he should ask farther questions. In the mean time, Garnet, do you write and send off just such another. [*Exeunt*

Enter CROAKER

CROAKER. Death and destruction! Are all the horrors of air, fire, and water, to be levelled only at me? Am I only to be singled out for gunpowder-plots, combustibles, and conflagration? Here it is—an incendiary letter° dropped at my door. "To Muster Croaker, these with speed." Ay, ay, plain enough the direction: all in the genuine incendiary spelling, and as cramp as the devil. "With speed." Oh, confound your speed! But let me read it once more. [*Reads.*] "Muster Croaker, as sone as yoew see this, leve twenty gunnes at the bar of the Talboot tell caled for, or yoew and yower experetion will be al blown up." Ah, but too plain! Blood and gunpowder in every line of it. Blown up! murderous dog! All blown up! Heavens! what have I and my poor family done, to be all blown up? [*Reads.*] "Our pockets are low, and money we must have." Ay, there's the reason; they'll blow us up, because they have got low pockets. [*Reads.*] "It is but a short time you have to consider; for if this takes wind, the house will quickly be

all of a flame." Inhuman monsters! blow us up, and then burn us! The earthquake at Lisbon was but a bonfire to it. [*Reads.*] "Make quick despatch, and so no more at present. But may Cupid, the little god of Love, go with you wherever you go." The little god of love! Cupid, the little god of love, go with me!—Go you to the devil, you and your little Cupid together. I'm so frightened, I scarce know whether I sit, stand, or go. Perhaps this moment I'm treading on lighted matches, blazing brimstone, and barrels of gunpowder. They are preparing to blow me up into the clouds. Murder! We shall be all burnt in our beds; we shall be all burnt in our beds!

Enter MISS RICHLAND

MISS RICHLAND. Lord, sir, what's the matter?

CROAKER. Murder's the matter. We shall be all blown up in our beds before morning.

MISS RICHLAND. I hope not, sir.

CROAKER. What signifies what you hope, madam, when I have a certificate of it here in my hand? Will nothing alarm my family? Sleeping and eating—sleeping and eating is the only work from morning till night in my house. My insensible crew could sleep though

rocked by an earthquake, and fry beef-steaks at a volcano.

MISS RICHLAND. But, sir, you have alarmed them so often already; we have nothing but earthquakes, famines, plagues, and mad dogs, from year's end to year's end. You remember, sir, it is not above a month ago, you assured us of a conspiracy among the bakers to poison us in our bread; and so kept the whole family a week upon potatoes.

CROAKER. And potatoes were too good for them. But why do I stand talking here with a girl, when I should be facing the enemy without? Here, John, Nicodemus, search the house. Look into the cellars, to see if there be any combustibles below; and above, in the apartments, that no matches be thrown in at the windows. Let all the fires be put out, and let the engine be drawn out in the yard, to play upon the house in case of necessity. [*Exit*

MISS RICHLAND. [*Alone.*] What can he mean by all this? Yet why should I inquire, when he alarms us in this manner almost every day? But Honeywood has desired an interview with me in private. What can he mean? or rather, what means this palpitation at his approach? It is the first time he ever showed anything in his conduct that seemed particular. Sure he cannot mean to—but he's here.

Enter HONEYWOOD

HONEYWOOD. I presumed to solicit this interview, madam, before I left town, to be permitted—

MISS RICHLAND. Indeed!—Leaving town, sir?

HONEYWOOD. Yes, madam; perhaps the kingdom. I have presumed, I say, to desire the favour of this interview, in order to disclose something which our long friendship prompts. And yet my fears—

MISS RICHLAND. His fears! What are his fears to mine! [*Aside.*] We have, indeed, been long acquainted, sir; very long. If I remember, our first meeting was at the French ambassador's. Do you recollect how you were pleased to rally me upon my complexion there?

HONEYWOOD. Perfectly, madam: I presumed to reprove you for painting; but your warmer blushes soon convinced the company that the colouring was all from nature.

MISS RICHLAND. And yet you only meant it in your good-natured way, to make me pay a compliment to myself. In the same manner, you danced that night with the most awkward woman in company, because you saw nobody else would take her out.

HONEYWOOD. Yes; and was rewarded the

next night, by dancing with the finest woman in company, whom everybody wished to take out.

MISS RICHLAND. Well, sir, if you thought so then, I fear your judgment has since corrected the errors of a first impression. We generally show to most advantage at first. Our sex are like poor tradesmen, that put all their best goods to be seen at the windows.

HONEYWOOD. The first impression, madam, did indeed deceive me. I expected to find a woman with all the faults of conscious, flattered beauty; I expected to find her vain and insolent. But every day has since taught me that it is possible to possess sense without pride, and beauty without affectation.

MISS RICHLAND. This, sir, is a style very unusual with Mr. Honeywood; and I should be glad to know why he thus attempts to increase that vanity, which his own lessons have taught me to despise.

HONEYWOOD. I ask pardon, madam. Yet, from our long friendship, I presumed I might have some right to offer, without offence, what you may refuse without offending.

MISS RICHLAND. Sir! I beg you'd reflect: though I fear I shall scarce have any power to refuse a request of yours, yet, you may be precipitate: consider, sir.

HONEYWOOD. I own my rashness; but as I

plead the cause of friendship, of one who loves —don't be alarmed, madam—who loves you with the most ardent passion, whose whole happiness is placed in you—

MISS RICHLAND. I fear, sir, I shall never find whom you mean, by this description of him.

HONEYWOOD. Ah, madam, it but too plainly points him out; though he should be too humble himself to urge his pretensions, or you too modest to understand them.

MISS RICHLAND. Well, it would be affectation any longer to pretend ignorance; and, I will own, sir, I have long been prejudiced in his favour. It was but natural to wish to make his heart mine, as he seemed himself ignorant of its value.

HONEYWOOD. I see she always loved him. [*Aside.*] I find, madam, you're already sensible of his worth, his passion. How happy is my friend to be the favourite of one with such sense to distinguish merit, and such beauty to reward it!

MISS RICHLAND. Your friend, sir! what friend?

HONEYWOOD. My best friend—my friend Mr. Lofty, madam.

MISS RICHLAND. He, sir!

HONEYWOOD. Yes, he, madam. He is, indeed, what your warmest wishes might have

formed him; and to his other qualities he adds that of the most passionate regard for you.

MISS RICHLAND. Amazement!—No more of this, I beg you, sir.

HONEYWOOD. I see your confusion, madam, and know how to interpret it. And, since I so plainly read the language of your heart, shall I make my friend happy, by communicating your sentiments?

MISS RICHLAND. By no means.

HONEYWOOD. Excuse me, I must; I know you desire it.

MISS RICHLAND. Mr. Honeywood, let me tell you, that you wrong my sentiments and yourself. When I first applied to your friendship, I expected advice and assistance; but now, sir, I see that it is in vain to expect happiness from him who has been so bad an economist of his own; and that I must disclaim his friendship who ceases to be a friend to himself. [*Exit*

HONEYWOOD. How is this? she has confessed she loved him, and yet she seemed to part in displeasure. Can I have done anything to reproach myself with? No; I believe not: yet, after all, these things should not be done by a third person: I should have spared her confusion. My friendship carried me a little too far.

Enter CROAKER, *with the letter in his hand, and* MRS. CROAKER

MRS. CROAKER. Ha! ha! ha! And so, my dear, it's your supreme wish that I should be quite wretched upon this occasion? Ha! ha!

CROAKER. [*Mimicking.*] Ha! ha! ha! And so, my dear, it's your supreme pleasure to give me no better consolation?

MRS. CROAKER. Positively, my dear: what is this incendiary stuff and trumpery to me? Our house may travel through the air like the house of Loretto,° for aught I care, if I'm to be miserable in it.

CROAKER. Would to Heaven it were converted into a house of correction for your benefit. Have we not everything to alarm us? Perhaps this very moment the tragedy is beginning!

MRS. CROAKER. Then let us reserve our distress till the rising of the curtain, or give them the money they want, and have done with them.

CROAKER. Give them my money!—And pray, what right have they to my money?

MRS. CROAKER. And pray, what right, then, have you to my good-humour?

CROAKER. And so your good-humour advises me to part with my money? Why, then, to tell your good-humour a piece of my mind, I'd

sooner part with my wife. Here's Mr. Honeywood; see what he'll say to it. My dear Honeywood, look at this incendiary letter dropped at my door. It will freeze you with terror; and yet lovey here can read it—can read it, and laugh!

MRS. CROAKER. Yes, and so will Mr. Honeywood.

CROAKER. If he does, I'll suffer to be hanged the next minute in the rogue's place, that's all.

MRS. CROAKER. Speak, Mr. Honeywood; is there anything more foolish than my husband's fright upon this occasion?

HONEYWOOD. It would not become me to decide, madam; but, doubtless, the greatness of his terrors now will but invite them to renew their villainy another time.

MRS. CROAKER. I told you, he'd be of my opinion.

CROAKER. How, sir! Do you maintain that I should lie down under such an injury, and show, neither by my fears nor complaints, that I have something of the spirit of a man in me?

HONEYWOOD. Pardon me, sir. You ought to make the loudest complaints, if you desire redress. The surest way to have redress is to be earnest in the pursuit of it.

CROAKER. Ay, whose opinion is he of now?

MRS. CROAKER. But don't you think that laughing off our fears is the best way?

HONEYWOOD. What is the best, madam, few can say; but I'll maintain it to be a very wise way.

CROAKER. But we're talking of the best. Surely the best way is to face the enemy in the field, and not wait till he plunders us in our very bed-chamber.

HONEYWOOD. Why, sir, as to the best, that —that's a very wise way too.

MRS. CROAKER. But can anything be more absurd, than to double our distresses by our apprehensions, and put it in the power of every low fellow, that can scrawl ten words of wretched spelling, to torment us?

HONEYWOOD. Without doubt, nothing more absurd.

CROAKER. How! would it not be more absurd to despise the rattle till we are bit by the snake?

HONEYWOOD. Without doubt, perfectly absurd.

CROAKER. Then you are of my opinion?

HONEYWOOD. Entirely.

MRS. CROAKER. And you reject mine?

HONEYWOOD. Heavens forbid, madam! No; sure, no reasoning can be more just than yours. We ought certainly to despise malice if we

cannot oppose it, and not make the incendiary's pen as fatal to our repose as the highwayman's pistol.

MRS. CROAKER. Oh, then you think I'm quite right?

HONEYWOOD. Perfectly right.

CROAKER. A plague of plagues, we can't be both right. I ought to be sorry, or I ought to be glad. My hat must be on my head, or my hat must be off.

MRS. CROAKER. Certainly, in two opposite opinions, if one be perfectly reasonable, the other can't be perfectly right.

HONEYWOOD. And why may not both be right, madam? Mr. Croaker in earnestly seeking redress, and you in waiting the event with good-humour? Pray, let me see the letter again. I have it. This letter requires twenty guineas to be left at the bar of the Talbot inn. If it be indeed an incendiary letter, what if you and I, sir, go there; and, when the writer comes to be paid his expected booty, seize him?

CROAKER. My dear friend, it's the very thing—the very thing. While I walk by the door, you shall plant yourself in ambush near the bar; burst out upon the miscreant like a masked battery; extort a confession at once, and so hang him up by surprise.

HONEYWOOD. Yes; but I would not choose to exercise too much severity. It is my maxim, sir, that crimes generally punish themselves.

CROAKER. [*Ironically.*] Well, but we may upbraid him a little, I suppose?

HONEYWOOD. Ay, but not punish him too rigidly.

CROAKER. Well, well, leave that to my own benevolence.

HONEYWOOD. Well, I do; but remember that universal benevolence is the first law of nature.

[*Exeunt* HONEYWOOD *and* MRS. CROAKER

CROAKER. Yes; and my universal benevolence will hang the dog, if he had as many necks as a hydra.

ACT V

SCENE I

An Inn

Enter OLIVIA *and* JARVIS

OLIVIA. Well, we have got safe to the inn, however. Now, if the post-chaise were ready—

JARVIS. The horses are just finishing their oats; and, as they are not going to be married, they choose to take their own time.

OLIVIA. You are forever giving wrong motives to my impatience.

JARVIS. Be as impatient as you will, the horses must take their own time; besides, you don't consider we have got no answer from our fellow-traveller yet. If we hear nothing from Mr. Leontine, we have only one way left us.

OLIVIA. What way?

JARVIS. The way home again.

OLIVIA. Not so. I have made a resolution to go, and nothing shall induce me to break it.

JARVIS. Ay; resolutions are well kept, when they jump with inclination. However, I'll go hasten things without. And I'll call, too, at the bar to see if anything should be left for us there. Don't be in such a plaguy hurry, madam, and we shall go the faster, I promise you. [*Exit*

Enter LANDLADY

LANDLADY. What! Solomon, why don't you move? Pipes and tobacco for the Lamb there.—Will nobody answer? To the Dolphin; quick. The Angel has been outrageous this half hour. Did your ladyship call, madam?

OLIVIA. No, madam.

LANDLADY. I find as you're for Scotland, madam.—But that's no business of mine; married, or not married, I ask no questions. To be sure, we had a sweet little couple set off from

this two days ago for the same place. The gentleman, for a tailor, was, to be sure, as fine a spoken tailor as ever blew froth from a full pot. And the young lady so bashful, it was near half an hour before we could get her to finish a pint of raspberry between us.

OLIVIA. But this gentleman and I are not going to be married, I assure you.

LANDLADY. May be not. That's no business of mine. For certain, Scotch marriages seldom turn out well. There was, of my own knowledge, Miss Macfag, that married her father's footman. Alack-a-day, she and her husband soon parted, and now keep separate cellars in Hedge-lane.

OLIVIA. [*Aside.*] A very pretty picture of what lies before me!

Enter LEONTINE

LEONTINE. My dear Olivia, my anxiety, till you were out of danger, was too great to be resisted. I could not help coming to see you set out, though it exposes us to a discovery.

OLIVIA. May everything you do prove as fortunate. Indeed, Leontine, we have been most cruelly disappointed. Mr. Honeywood's bill upon the city has, it seems, been protested, and we have been utterly at a loss how to proceed.

LEONTINE. How! an offer of his own too! Sure, he could not mean to deceive us?

OLIVIA. Depend upon his sincerity; he only mistook the desire for the power of serving us. But let us think no more of it. I believe the post-chaise is ready by this.

LANDLADY. Not quite yet; and begging your ladyship's pardon, I don't think your ladyship quite ready for the post-chaise. The north road is a cold place, madam. I have a drop in the house of as pretty raspberry as ever was tipt over tongue. Just a thimble-full to keep the wind off your stomach. To be sure, the last couple we had here, they said it was a perfect nosegay. Ecod, I sent them both away as good-natured—Up went the blinds, round went the wheels, and "Drive away, postboy!" was the word.

Enter CROAKER

CROAKER. Well, while my friend Honey-wood is upon the post of danger at the bar, it must be my business to have an eye about me here. I think I know an incendiary's look; for wherever the devil makes a purchase, he never fails to set his mark. Ha! who have we here? My son and daughter! What can they be doing here?

LANDLADY. I tell you, madam, it will do you good; I think I know by this time what's good for the north road. It's a raw night, madam. —Sir—

LEONTINE. Not a drop more, good madam. I should now take it as a greater favour, if you hasten the horses, for I am afraid to be seen myself.

LANDLADY. That shall be done. Wha, Solomon! are you all dead there? Wha, Solomon, I say! [*Exit, bawling*

OLIVIA. Well, I dread lest an expedition begun in fear, should end in repentance. Every moment we stay increases our danger, and adds to my apprehensions.

LEONTINE. There's no danger, trust me, my dear; there can be none. If Honeywood has acted with honour, and kept my father, as he promised, in employment till we are out of danger, nothing can interrupt our journey.

OLIVIA. I have no doubt of Mr. Honeywood's sincerity, and even his desires to serve us. My fears are from your father's suspicions. A mind so disposed to be alarmed without a cause, will be but too ready when there's a reason.

LEONTINE. Why, let him, when we are out of his power. But believe me, Olivia, you have no great reason to dread his resentment. His repining temper, as it does no manner of injury to himself, so will it never do harm to others. He only frets to keep himself employed, and scolds for his private amusement.

OLIVIA. I don't know that; but I'm sure,

on some occasions, it makes him look most shockingly.

CROAKER. [*Discovering himself.*] How does he look now?—How does he look now?

OLIVIA. Ah!

LEONTINE. Undone!

CROAKER. How do I look now? Sir, I am your very humble servant. Madam, I am yours! What! you are going off, are you? Then, first, if you please, take a word or two from me with you before you go. Tell me first where you are going; and when you have told me that, perhaps I shall know as little as I did before.

LEONTINE. If that be so, our answer might but increase your displeasure, without adding to your information.

CROAKER. I want no information from you, puppy; and you, too, good madam, what answer have you got? Eh! [*A cry without,* "Stop him."] I think I heard a noise. My friend Honeywood, without—has he seized the incendiary? Ah, no, for now I hear no more on't.

LEONTINE. Honeywood without! Then, sir, it was Mr. Honeywood that directed you hither?

CROAKER. No, sir, it was Mr. Honeywood conducted me hither.

LEONTINE. Is it possible?

CROAKER. Possible! Why, he's in the house now, sir; more anxious about me than my own son, sir.

LEONTINE. Then, sir, he's a villain.

CROAKER. How, sirrah! a villain, because he takes most care of your father? I'll not bear it. I tell you, I'll not bear it. Honeywood is a friend to the family, and I'll have him treated as such.

LEONTINE. I shall study to repay his friendship as it deserves.

CROAKER. Ah, rogue, if you knew how earnestly he entered into my griefs, and pointed out the means to detect them, you would love him as I do. [*A cry without,* "Stop him."] Fire and fury! they have seized the incendiary: they have the villain, the incendiary, in view. Stop him! stop an incendiary! a murderer! stop him! [*Exit*

OLIVIA. Oh, my terrors! What can this new tumult mean?

LEONTINE. Some new mark, I suppose, of Mr. Honeywood's sincerity. But we shall have satisfaction: he shall give me instant satisfaction.

OLIVIA. It must not be, my Leontine, if you value my esteem, or my happiness. Whatever be our fate, let us not add guilt to our misfortunes: Consider that our innocence will shortly be all that we have left us. You must forgive him.

LEONTINE. Forgive him! Has he not in every instance betrayed us? Forced me to borrow

money from him, which appears a mere trick to delay us; promised to keep my father engaged till we were out of danger, and here brought him to the very scene of our escape!

OLIVIA. Don't be precipitate. We may yet be mistaken.

Enter POSTBOY, *dragging in* JARVIS; HONEYWOOD *entering soon after*

POSTBOY. Ay, master, we have him fast enough. Here is the incendiary dog. I'm entitled to the reward; I'll take my oath I saw him ask for the money at the bar, and then run for it.

HONEYWOOD. Come, bring him along. Let us see him! Let him learn to blush for his crimes. [*Discovering his mistake.*] Death! what's here? Jarvis, Leontine, Olivia! What can all this mean?

JARVIS. Why, I'll tell you what it means: that I was an old fool, and that you are my master —that's all.

HONEYWOOD. Confusion!

LEONTINE. Yes, sir, I find you have kept your word with me. After such baseness, I wonder how you can venture to see the man you have injured?

HONEYWOOD. My dear Leontine, by my life, my honour—

LEONTINE. Peace, peace, for shame; and do not continue to aggravate baseness by hypocrisy. I know you, sir, I know you.

HONEYWOOD. Why won't you hear me? By all that's just, I knew not—

LEONTINE. Hear you, sir! to what purpose? I now see through all your low arts; your ever complying with every opinion; your never refusing any request; your friendship, as common as a prostitute's favours, and as fallacious; all these, sir, have long been contemptible to the world, and are now perfectly so to me.

HONEYWOOD. Ha! contemptible to the world! that reaches me. [*Aside.*]

LEONTINE. All the seeming sincerity of your professions, I now find were only allurements to betray; and all your seeming regret for their consequences, only calculated to cover the cowardice of your heart. Draw, villain!

Enter CROAKER, *out of breath*

CROAKER. Where is the villain? Where is the incendiary? [*Seizing the* POSTBOY.] Hold him fast, the dog; he has the gallows in his face. Come, you dog, confess; confess all, and hang yourself.

POSTBOY. Zounds! master, what do you throttle me for?

CROAKER. [*Beating him.*] Dog, do you resist? do you resist?

POSTBOY. Zounds! master, I'm not he; there's the man that we thought was the rogue, and turns out to be one of the company.

CROAKER. How!

HONEYWOOD. Mr. Croaker, we have all been under a strange mistake here; I find there is nobody guilty; it was all an error—entirely an error of our own.

CROAKER. And I say, sir, that you're in an error; for there's guilt and double guilt, a plot, a damned jesuitical, pestilential plot, and I must have proof of it.

HONEYWOOD. Do but hear me.

CROAKER. What, you intend to bring 'em off, I suppose! I'll hear nothing.

HONEYWOOD. Madam, you seem at least calm enough to hear reason.

OLIVIA. Excuse me.

HONEYWOOD. Good Jarvis, let me then explain it to you.

JARVIS. What signifies explanations when the thing is done?

HONEYWOOD. Will nobody hear me? Was there ever such a set, so blinded by passion and prejudice? [*To the* POSTBOY.] My good friend, I believe you'll be surprised when I assure you—

POSTBOY. Sure me nothing—I'm sure of nothing but a good beating.

CROAKER. Come then, you, madam, if you ever hope for any favour or forgiveness, tell me sincerely all you know of this affair.

OLIVIA. Unhappily, sir, I'm but too much the cause of your suspicions: you see before you, sir, one that, with false pretences has stept into your family to betray it; not your daughter—

CROAKER. Not my daughter!

OLIVIA. Not your daughter—but a mean deceiver—who—support me, I cannot—

HONEYWOOD. Help! she's going; give her air.

CROAKER. Ay, ay, take the young woman to the air; I would not hurt a hair of her head, whosesoever daughter she may be—not so bad as that neither. [*Exeunt all but* CROAKER Yes, yes, all's out; I now see the whole affair. My son is either married, or going to be so, to this lady, whom he imposed upon me as his sister. Ay, certainly so; and yet I don't find it afflicts me so much as one might think. There's the advantage of fretting away our misfortunes beforehand,—we never feel them when they come.

Enter MISS RICHLAND *and* SIR WILLIAM

SIR WILLIAM. But how do you know,

Will nobody hear me?

madam, that my nephew intends setting off from this place?

MISS RICHLAND. My maid assured me he was come to this inn, and my own knowledge of his intending to leave the kingdom suggested the rest. But what do I see? my guardian here before us! Who, my dear sir, could have expected meeting you here? To what accident do we owe this pleasure?

CROAKER. To a fool, I believe.

MISS RICHLAND. But to what purpose did you come?

CROAKER. To play the fool.

MISS RICHLAND. But with whom?

CROAKER. With greater fools than myself.

MISS RICHLAND. Explain.

CROAKER. Why, Mr. Honeywood brought me here, to do nothing now I am here; and my son is going to be married, to I don't know who, that is here. So now you are as wise as I am.

MISS RICHLAND. Married! to whom, sir?

CROAKER. To Olivia, my daughter, as I took her to be; but who the devil she is, or whose daughter she is, I know no more than the man in the moon.

SIR WILLIAM. Then, sir, I can inform you; and, though a stranger, yet you shall find me a friend to your family. It will be enough, at present, to assure you, that both in point of birth

and fortune, the young lady is at least your son's equal. Being left by her father, Sir James Woodville—

CROAKER. Sir James Woodville! What, of the west?

SIR WILLIAM. Being left by him, I say, to the care of a mercenary wretch, whose only aim was to secure her fortune to himself, she was sent to France, under pretence of education; and there every art was tried to fix her for life in a convent, contrary to her inclinations. Of this I was informed upon my arrival at Paris; and, as I had been once her father's friend, I did all in my power to frustrate her guardian's base intentions. I had even meditated to rescue her from his authority, when your son stept in with more pleasing violence, gave her liberty, and you a daughter.

CROAKER. But I intend to have a daughter of my own choosing, sir. A young lady, sir, whose fortune, by my interest with those that have interest, will be double what my son has a right to expect. Do you know Mr. Lofty, sir?

SIR WILLIAM. Yes, sir; and know that you are deceived in him. But step this way, and I'll convince you.

[CROAKER *and* SIR WILLIAM *seem to confer.*

Enter HONEYWOOD

HONEYWOOD. Obstinate man, still to persist

in his outrage! Insulted by him, despised by all, I now begin to grow contemptible even to myself. How have I sunk, by too great an assiduity to please! How have I overtaxed all my abilities, lest the approbation of a single fool should escape me! But all is now over: I have survived my reputation, my fortune, my friendships, and nothing remains henceforward for me but solitude and repentance.

MISS RICHLAND. Is it true, Mr. Honeywood, that you are setting off, without taking leave of your friends? The report is, that you are quitting England. Can it be?

HONEYWOOD. Yes, madam; and though I am so unhappy as to have fallen under your displeasure, yet, thank Heaven! I leave you to happiness—to one who loves you, and deserves your love—to one who has power to procure you affluence, and generosity to improve your enjoyment of it.

MISS RICHLAND. And are you sure, sir, that the gentleman you mean is what you describe him?

HONEYWOOD. I have the best assurances of it—his serving me. He does indeed deserve the highest happiness, and that is in your power to confer. As for me, weak and wavering as I have been, obliged by all, and incapable of serving any, what happiness can I find but in solitude? What hope, but in being forgotten?

MISS RICHLAND. A thousand! to live among friends that esteem you, whose happiness it will be to be permitted to oblige you.

HONEYWOOD. No, madam, my resolution is fixed. Inferiority among strangers is easy; but among those that once were equals, insupportable. Nay, to show you how far my resolution can go, I can now speak with calmness of my former follies, my vanity, my dissipation, my weakness. I will even confess, that, among the number of my other presumptions, I had the insolence to think of loving you. Yes, madam, while I was pleading the passion of another, my heart was tortured with its own. But it is over; it was unworthy our friendship, and let it be forgotten.

MISS RICHLAND. You amaze me!

HONEYWOOD. But you'll forgive it, I know you will; since the confession should not have come from me even now, but to convince you of the sincerity of my intention of—never mentioning it more. [*Going.*]

MISS RICHLAND. Stay, sir, one moment— Ha! he here—

Enter LOFTY

LOFTY. Is the coast clear? None but friends? I have followed you here with a trifling piece of intelligence; but it goes no farther; things are

not yet ripe for a discovery. I have spirits working at a certain board; your affair at the Treasury will be done in less than—a thousand years. Mum!

MISS RICHLAND. Sooner, sir, I should hope.

LOFTY. Why, yes, I believe it may, if it falls into proper hands, that know where to push and where to parry; that know how the land lies—eh, Honeywood?

MISS RICHLAND. It has fallen into yours.

LOFTY. Well, to keep you no longer in suspense, your thing is done. It is done, I say—that's all. I have just had assurances from Lord Neverout, that the claim has been examined, and found admissible. *Quietus* is the word, madam.

HONEYWOOD. But how? his lordship has been at Newmarket these ten days.

LOFTY. Indeed! Then Sir Gilbert Goose must have been most damnably mistaken. I had it of him.

MISS RICHLAND. He! why, Sir Gilbert and his family have been in the country this month.

LOFTY. This month! it must certainly be so—Sir Gilbert's letter did come to me from Newmarket, so that he must have met his lordship there; and so it came about. I have his letter about me; I'll read it to you. [*Taking out a large bundle.*] That's from Paoli° of Corsica, that from the Marquis of Squilachi.°—Have you a

mind to see a letter from Count Poniatowski,° now King of Poland? Honest Pon!—[*Searching.*] Oh, sir, what, are you here too? I'll tell you what, honest friend, if you have not absolutely delivered my letter to Sir William Honeywood, you may return it. The thing will do without him.

SIR WILLIAM. Sir, I have delivered it; and must inform you, it was received with the most mortifying contempt.

CROAKER. Contempt! Mr. Lofty, what can that mean?

LOFTY. Let him go on, let him go on, I say. You'll find it come to something presently.

SIR WILLIAM. Yes, sir; I believe you'll be amazed. After waiting some time in the antechamber, after being surveyed with insolent curiosity by the passing servants, I was at last assured, that Sir William Honeywood knew no such person, and I must certainly have been imposed upon.

LOFTY. Good! let me die! very good! Ha! ha! ha!

CROAKER. Now, for my life, I can't find out half the goodness of it.

LOFTY. You can't? Ha! ha!

CROAKER. No, for the soul of me: I think it was as confounded a bad answer as

ever was sent from one private gentleman to another.

LOFTY. And so you can't find out the force of the message? Why, I was in the house at that very time. Ha! ha! it was I that sent that very answer to my own letter. Ha! ha!

CROAKER. Indeed! How? why?

LOFTY. In one word, things between Sir William and me must be behind the curtain. A party has many eyes. He sides with Lord Buzzard; I side with Sir Gilbert Goose. So that unriddles the mystery.

CROAKER. And so it does, indeed; and all my suspicions are over.

LOFTY. Your suspicions! What, then, you have been suspecting, you have been suspecting, have you? Mr. Croaker, you and I were friends—we are friends no longer. Never talk to me. It's over; I say, it's over.

CROAKER. As I hope for your favour, I did not mean to offend. It escaped me. Don't be discomposed.

LOFTY. Zounds! sir, but I am discomposed, and will be discomposed. To be treated thus! Who am I? Was it for this I have been dreaded both by ins and outs? Have I been libelled in the *Gazetteer*,° and praised in the

St. James's°; have I been chaired at Wildman's,° and a speaker at Merchant-Tailors' Hall; have I had my hand to addresses, and my head in the print-shops; and talk to me of suspects?

CROAKER. My dear sir, be pacified. What can you have but asking pardon?

LOFTY. Sir, I will not be pacified!—Suspects! Who am I? To be used thus! Have I paid court to men in favour to serve my friends, the Lords of the Treasury, Sir William Honeywood, and the rest of the gang, and talk to me of suspects! Who am I, I say, who am I?

SIR WILLIAM. Since, sir, you are so pressing for an answer, I'll tell you who you are. A gentleman as well acquainted with politics as with men in power; as well acquainted with persons of fashion as with modesty; with Lords of the Treasury as with truth; and with all as you are with Sir William Honeywood. I am Sir William Honeywood. [*Discovering his ensigns of the Bath.*]

CROAKER. Sir William Honeywood!

HONEYWOOD. Astonishment! my uncle! [*Aside.*]

LOFTY. So, then, my confounded genius has been all this time only leading me up to the garret, in order to fling me out of the window.

CROAKER. What, Mr. Importance, and are these your works? Suspect you! You, who have

been dreaded by the ins and outs; you, who have had your hand to addresses, and your head stuck up in print-shops. If you were served right, you should have your head stuck up in the pillory.

LOFTY. Ay, stick it where you will; for, by the Lord, it cuts but a very poor figure where it sticks at present.

SIR WILLIAM. Well, Mr. Croaker, I hope you now see how incapable this gentleman is of serving you, and how little Miss Richland has to expect from his influence.

CROAKER. Ay, sir, too well I see it; and I can't but say I have had some boding of it these ten days. So I'm resolved, since my son has placed his affections on a lady of moderate fortune, to be satisfied with his choice, and not run the hazard of another Mr. Lofty in helping him to a better.

SIR WILLIAM. I approve your resolution; and here they come, to receive a confirmation of your pardon and consent.

Enter MRS. CROAKER, JARVIS, LEONTINE, *and* OLIVIA

MRS. CROAKER. Where's my husband? Come, come, lovey, you must forgive them. Jarvis here has been to tell me the whole affair; and I say, you must forgive them. Our own

was a stolen match, you know, my dear; and we never had any reason to repent of it.

CROAKER. I wish we could both say so. However, this gentleman, Sir William Honeywood, has been beforehand with you in obtaining their pardon. So, if the two poor fools have a mind to marry, I think we can tack them together without crossing the Tweed for it. [*Joining their hands.*]

LEONTINE. How blest, and unexpected! What, what can we say to such goodness? But our future obedience shall be the best reply. And as for this gentleman, to whom we owe—

SIR WILLIAM. Excuse me, sir, if I interrupt your thanks, as I have here an interest that calls me. [*Turning to* HONEYWOOD.] Yes, sir, you are surprised to see me; and I own that a desire of correcting your follies led me hither. I saw, with indignation, the errors of a mind that only sought applause from others; that easiness of disposition which, though inclined to the right, had not courage to condemn the wrong. I saw, with regret, those splendid errors, that still took name from some neighbouring duty; your charity, that was but injustice; your benevolence, that was but weakness; and your friendship, but credulity. I saw, with regret, great talents and extensive learning only employed to add sprightliness to error, and increase your perplexities. I saw your mind with a

thousand natural charms; but the greatness of its beauty served only to heighten my pity for its prostitution.

HONEYWOOD. Cease to upbraid me, sir: I have for some time but too strongly felt the justice of your reproaches. But there is one way still left me. Yes, sir, I have determined this very hour to quit forever a place where I have made myself the voluntary slave of all, and to seek among strangers that fortitude which may give strength to the mind, and marshal all its dissipated virtues. Yet, ere I depart, permit me to solicit favour for this gentleman who, notwithstanding what has happened, has laid me under the most signal obligations. Mr. Lofty—

LOFTY. Mr. Honeywood. I'm resolved upon a reformation as well as you. I now begin to find that the man who first invented the art of speaking truth, was a much cunninger fellow than I thought him. And to prove that I design to speak truth for the future, I must now assure you, that you owe your late enlargement to another; as, upon my soul, I had no hand in the matter. So now, if any of the company has a mind for preferment, he may take my place: I'm determined to resign. [*Exit*

HONEYWOOD. How have I been deceived!

SIR WILLIAM. No, sir, you have been obliged to a kinder, fairer friend, for that favour,—to

Miss Richland. Would she complete our joy, and make the man she has honoured by her friendship happy in her love, I should then forget all, and be as blest as the welfare of my dearest kinsman can make me.

MISS RICHLAND. After what is past, it would be but affectation to pretend to indifference. Yes, I will own an attachment, which I find was more than friendship. And if my entreaties cannot alter his resolution to quit the country, I will even try—if my hand has not power to detain him. [*Giving her hand.*]

HONEYWOOD. Heavens! how can I have deserved all this? How express my happiness—my gratitude? A moment like this overpays an age of apprehension.

CROAKER. Well, now I see content in every face; but Heaven send we be all better this day three months!

SIR WILLIAM. Henceforth, nephew, learn to respect yourself. He who seeks only for applause from without, has all his happiness in another's keeping.

HONEYWOOD. Yes, sir, I now too plainly perceive my errors: my vanity, in attempting to please all by fearing to offend any: my meanness, in approving folly lest fools should disapprove. Henceforth, therefore, it shall be my study to reserve my pity for real distress; my

friendship for true merit; and my love for her who first taught me what it is to be happy.

[*Exeunt* OMNES

EPILOGUE*

SPOKEN BY MRS. BULKLEY°

As puffing quacks some caitiff wretch procure
To swear the pill, or drop, has wrought a cure;
Thus, on the stage, our play-wrights still depend
For Epilogues and Prologues on some friend,
Who knows each art of coaxing up the town,
And makes full many a bitter pill go down.
Conscious of this, our bard has gone about,
And teased each rhyming friend to help him out.
An Epilogue! things can't go on without it!
It could not fail, would you but set about it.
"Young man," cries one (a bard laid up in clover),
"Alas! young man, my writing days are over!
Let boys play tricks, and kick the straw, not I;
Your brother Doctor, there, perhaps, may try."

* The author, in expectation of an Epilogue from a friend at Oxford, deferred writing one himself till the very last hour. What is here offered owes all its success to the graceful manner of the actress who spoke it.

"What, I, dear sir?" the Doctor interposes,
"What, plant my thistle, sir, among his roses!
No, no, I've other contests to maintain;
To-night I head our troops at Warwick-Lane.°
Go, ask your manager.°"—"Who, me! Your pardon;
Those things are not our forte at Covent-Garden."
Our author's friends, thus placed at happy distance,
Give him good words indeed, but no assistance.
As some unhappy wight, at some new play,
At the pit door stands elbowing a way,
While oft, with many a smile, and many a shrug,
He eyes the centre, where his friends sit snug;
His simpering friends, with pleasure in their eyes,
Sink as he sinks, and as he rises rise:
He nods, they nod; he cringes, they grimace;
But not a soul will budge to give him place.
Since, then, unhelp'd, our bard must now conform
"To 'bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,"
Blame where you must, be candid where you can,
And be each critic the *Good-Natured Man.*

NOTES

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN

GOLDSMITH began this comedy in 1766. He was disgusted with the comedies which contained neither wit nor gayety of parts, nor nature, nor true humor, in conception of plot or character-portrayal. In *The Present State of Polite Learning* he had lashed the dramatic requirement of excellence that had been set by Garrick, and had continued his disapproval of the condition of the English stage in *The Bee*, *The Citizen of the World*, and his *Essays*.

The comedy of tears or of forced sentiment had arisen from a desire on the part of purists to remove the plague legacy of immorality whch had been left by the dramatists of the Restoration Period. Steele's attempt in *The Conscious Lovers* of 1722 made possible the ephemeral existence of a mosquito cloud of dramatists such as Kelly, Foote, Cumberland, Colman the elder, and Macklin.

Goldsmith had little patience with such a play as Charles Macklin's *Love à-la-Mode* of 1759, or for such a piece as George Colman's *The Jealous Wife* of 1761; but he was very much impressed by Colman and Garrick's *The Clandestine Marriage*, 1766, since he detected in it signs of hostility toward serio-sentiment. Therefore, he thought he would contribute to the cause of reformation *The Good-Natured Man*, which he had finished early in 1767. He desired to submit the play to Garrick, but was conscious of the criticisms that had been written in his prose writings on the condition of the English drama, and of the fact that the great actor had refused to vote for him as Secretary of the Royal Academy. Perhaps Garrick did read his manuscript, and gave a gentle hint to Johnson that Drury Lane could not accept such a play. So,

in any case, we can understand why Covent Garden obtained the privilege of putting it on. Goldsmith would not toady, would not flatter an actor and please an audience. When Colman the elder, manager of Covent Garden, the formidable rival of Garrick, was asked to stage the comedy, the "avaricious" manager of Drury Lane at once rushed Kelly's new sentimental play, *False Delicacy*, which for eight nights, beginning January 23, 1768, had a phenomenal run, taking the town by storm. By the success of *False Delicacy* it is easy to comprehend the reluctance with which Colman set in motion a doubtful comedy. However, to please Johnson, Burke, and the poet dressed in Tyrian bloom and satin grain and blue silk breeches, he ran it for nine nights; removing in its course the bailiff scene. Though it brought £400 to the disconsolate author, yet it was largely a failure, by reason of the "finessing and trick" of Johnson's erstwhile pupil, David Garrick.

Davies, a very finely trained actor, in his *Life of Garrick*, says: "Two characters in this comedy were absolutely unknown before to the English stage; a man who boasts an intimacy with persons of high rank whom he never saw, and another who is almost always lamenting misfortunes he never knew. Croaker is highly designed, and as strongly finished a portrait of a discontented man, of one who disturbs every happiness he possesses, from apprehension of distant evil, as any character of Congreve, or any other of our English dramatists. Shuter acted Croaker with that warm glee of fancy, and genuine flow of humour, that always accompanied his best and most animated performance."

PROLOGUE

Bensley: Robert Bensley, 1738–1817. He was a great actor, especially an excellent Iago. He retired from the stage in 1796. See *Dramatis Personæ*.

22. **Crispin:** St. Crispin was the patron saint of shoemakers.

ACT I

439. Almack's. Goldsmith is referring to the assembly rooms in King Street, St. James.

441. painted ruins. These were situated at the ends of the prominent walks in Old Vauxhall Gardens.

552. trip to Scotland. Read Goldsmith's *Essay XXIII.*, "Scottish Marriages."

ACT II

321. land-carriage fishery. In 1761 machines for carrying fish by land were established.

322. jag-hire: in India, the assigning of a piece of land to a person for life.

ACT III

91. Smoke: take notice of. Cf. Swift's *Journal to Stella*, Letter VI.: "I fancy you will smoke me in the Tatler I am going to write, for I believe I have told you the hint."

117. Morocco. Mr. Flanigan had been Merry Andrew to a puppet-show.

165. Hawke or Amherst. In 1759, Admiral Hawke had defeated the French in Quiberon Bay. General Amherst ought to interest American students, since he captured Ticonderoga.

ACT IV

286. incendiary letter. "Goldsmith owned that he was indebted for his first conception of the character of Croaker to Johnson's Suspirius in the *Rambler*. Croaker's reading the incendiary letter in the fourth act was received with a roar of approbation.—MITFORD.

485. Loretto: the house at Loretto in Italy. Tradition says that while at Nazareth, the Virgin Mary lived in this house, which before 1291 had had many changes of location.

ACT V

428. Paoli: Pascal Paoli, the patriot of Corsica, at that time in London. **429. Squilachi:** Squillaci was the Spanish Prime Minister.

430. Count Poniatowski: Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, who was Poland's last king.

487. the Gazetteer: a daily paper noted for its satirical articles. Samuel Richardson for a time supervised its sheets.

488. St. James's: the *St. James's Chronicle.*

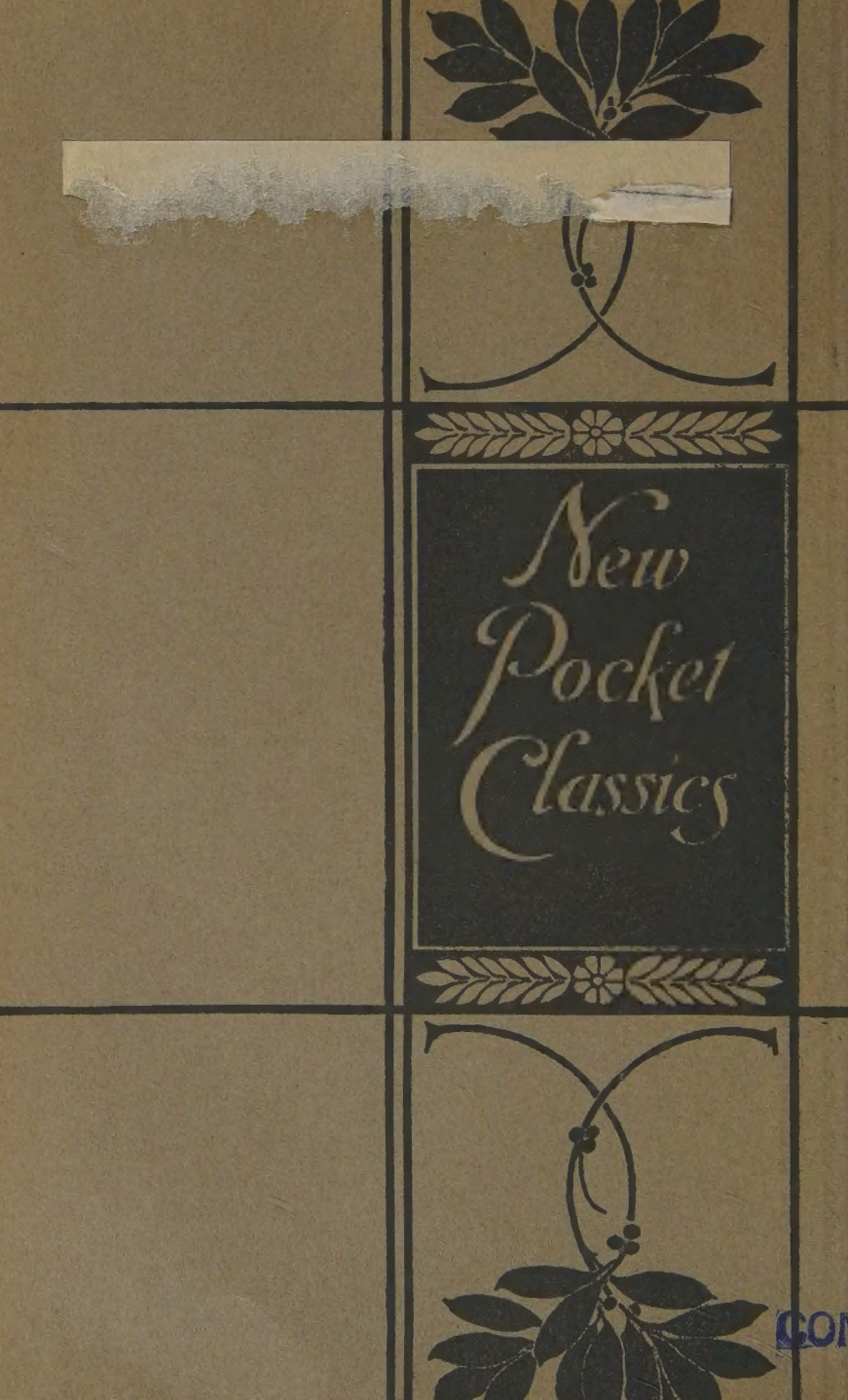
489. Wildman's: a London coffee-house frequented by politicians.

EPILOGUE

Mrs. Bulkley. This actress afterward took the part of Miss Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer.*

18. Warwick-Lane. According to Dobson, Wren's old College of Physicians, situated in Warwick Lane, at that time was in warm quarrel about the exclusion of certain Licentiates from Fellowships.

19. manager: George Colman, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre.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